

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Digital Repository

---

Graduate Theses and Dissertations

Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and  
Dissertations

---

2011

## Real diversity or just another mask: an ethnomethodological study of authentic ethnicity of African-American community college administrators

Albert Devon Farr  
*Iowa State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd>



Part of the [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Farr, Albert Devon, "Real diversity or just another mask: an ethnomethodological study of authentic ethnicity of African-American community college administrators" (2011). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 10462.  
<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/10462>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [digirep@iastate.edu](mailto:digirep@iastate.edu).

**Real diversity or just another mask: An ethnomethodological study of  
authentic**

**ethnicity of African-American community college administrators**

by

**Albert Devon Farr**

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Leadership)

Program of Study Committee:  
Larry Ebbers, Major Professor  
Sharon Drake  
Frankie Laanan  
Daniel Robinson  
Margaret Torrie

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2011

Copyright © Albert Devon Farr, 2011. All rights reserved.

This dissertation is dedicated to my African American foremothers and forefathers whose hard work and scholarship has often been ignored or undervalued

And to the original Dr. Albert, my namesake and my inspiration for remaining connected to my community.

Thank you.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Statement .....	2
Purpose of Study.....	4
Research Questions.....	4
Theoretical Framework.....	5
Significance of Study .....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Chapter Summary.....	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
The Community College Mission.....	11
Urban Missions.....	13
Community College Baccalaureate.....	14
Mission Revision.....	15
Retirements.....	17
Call for Diversity .....	19
Historical Assimilation of African-Americans in Education.....	21
Identity Models for African-Americans.....	28
Cross' Model of Nigrescence.....	29
Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity.....	31
Social Stressors.....	34
Emancipation .....	35
Future Directions.....	38
Conclusion.....	39
Chapter Summary.....	39
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....	42
Rationale for Qualitative Approach.....	42
Ethnomethodology.....	43
Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective.....	46
Research Sites.....	48
Participant Selection.....	50
Methods of Data Collection.....	51
Interviewing.....	51
Trustworthiness.....	53
Researcher Role and Reflexivity.....	54
Chapter Summary.....	56
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS.....	57
Site One: Midwestern Community College: East Campus .....	57
Participant One: Dr. Jeremy Scott .....	58
Positionality.....	60

Career Path .....	60
Vision and Initiatives in Diversity.....	63
Leadership and Authenticity.....	67
Summary .....	71
Site Two: The Plains Community College: South Campus.....	71
Participant Two: Dr. Campbell .....	82
Positionality .....	73
Career Path .....	74
Vision and Initiatives in Diversity .....	75
Leadership and Authenticity .....	77
Summary .....	80
Site Three: East Coast College .....	81
Participant Three: Dr. Peterson .....	82
Positionality .....	82
Career Path .....	83
Vision and Initiatives in Diversity.....	85
Leadership and Authenticity .....	87
Summary .....	95
Site Four: Coastal Valley Community College .....	96
Participant Four: Dr. Brown .....	96
Positionality .....	98
Career Path .....	98
Vision and Initiatives in Diversity .....	100
Leadership and Authenticity .....	103
Summary .....	104
Site Five: Southwestern Community College District .....	106
Participant Five: Dr. Johnson .....	106
Positionality .....	107
Career Path .....	108
Vision and Initiative in Diversity.....	109
Leadership and Authenticity .....	113
Summary .....	117
Site Six: Southern County College .....	119
Participant Six: Ms. Washington .....	119
Positionality .....	121
Career Path .....	121
Vision and Initiative in Diversity .....	123
Leadership and Authenticity .....	126
Summary .....	129
Participant Seven: Mr. Franks .....	130
Positionality .....	131
Career Path .....	131
Vision and Initiatives in Diversity .....	133
Leadership Style and Authenticity .....	137
Summary .....	138

CHAPTER FIVE: THEMES AND ANALYTICAL DISCUSSION.....	140
Overview of Themes .....	140
Theme One: Understanding a Personal Philosophy .....	142
Theme Two: Maintaining Public and Private Arenas/Personas .....	146
Theme Three: Acknowledging Generational Differences .....	153
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF STUDY .....	160
Responses to Research Questions .....	161
Limitations and Strengths of Study .....	165
Implications of Study .....	167
Recommendations for Further Research .....	168
Personal Reflection .....	169
APPENDIX A: Letter of Invitation .....	174
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Document .....	175
APPENDIX C: Interview Questions.....	181
REFERENCES:.....	182

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Usually the acknowledgements page is used to recognize those individuals who have inspired the scholar during their academic endeavors. Understandably, these are people who usually imprint some positive influences on the author during times of challenge. Though I will do the same, I have to first acknowledge those individuals who were not as supportive, but instead the haters who were really my motivators. Thank you, Jean Lassila and J.D. Beatty.

Now to those who have been there for me every step of the way: To “Ta” and Granddaddy I want to say thank you for everything. Had it not been for your love of music and sacrifice of that music, there is no telling where I would be. Your examples of scholarship and determination helped me in ways that are indescribable.

To my mother, Theresa, I have always felt your love and support. And despite my frequent self-doubts, I know that you are one person who has always been in my corner. I love you.

To my Leslie, thank you for being that big sister who not only protected me from the big bad babysitter with the watered-down pop, but who also taught me how to read at the age of three and started me down my academic path.

To Kristen, as long as I have known you, you have always exhibited an uber-sense of compassion, generosity, and sensitivity. As I celebrate this milestone in my life, I have to acknowledge that this is not an exception. Had you not been there for me to support me, I would have shed more tears than I have. Thank you.

To Darrell, your friendship and assistance throughout my ENTIRE time of the program was unmatched. Thank you for your guidance, wisdom, laughter, and sympathetic ear.

And lastly, to Susan Jahn; Ed Walker; Beulah Walker; my dawgs and brothers, Dusty, Regan, Mike Roland, Mike Terry, Buff Love, Jacob; Larry Ebbers and all of my committee members; John Schuh; Robyn Johnson; Jane Davis; DeRionne Pollard; Helen Benjamin; Jose Amaya; Beth Lofredda; Kris Fresonke; Lee Poague; ALL of the Martinez'; Evelyn Finklea and my SPC family; The esteemed members of The Presidents' Roundtable; Jessica Magnani; Kathy Hickok; Gloria Betcher; and all of my loved ones, I want to thank you all for your words, advice, smiles, and meals that have helped me do my Ph.D. thang!



**ABSTRACT**

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, W.E.B. DuBois theorized that African Americans, then referred to as Negroes, are forced to live a life of “double-consciousness” for survival. He asserts that navigating the thin line between the cultural expectations of White mainstream America, and being one’s authentic self, creates immeasurable stress and contempt. This ethnomethodological inquiry of racial and cultural dynamics of the community college seeks to understand the intentional strategies of seven African American community college presidents and chancellors, as they balance their authentic selves and the cultural mainstream of the community and the college. This study leads to a conscious integration of ideas and strategies that may supplement or even counter traditional ideologies, thereby reconstructing an institutional culture that encourages the growth of a truly diverse population of administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **Introduction**

Since its inception in the early twentieth century, community colleges have always subscribed to the needs of the surrounding community. Though Cohen and Brawer (2008) have described the contemporary curricular functions of community colleges as being establishments that provide vocation-technical education, continuing and developing education, as well as academic transfer preparation, all of these dimensions exist primarily to serve the surrounding community of the college itself. In addition, through the growing efficiency and implementation of technological advancements and distance coursework, community colleges have expanded their constituency to include a more global society, while the drive to provide academic support for their immediate community remains a seminal goal.

Understanding that one of the goals of the community college is to serve the surrounding community, it stands to reason why there is an initiative to create a welcoming environment and culture that may reflect the needs of its 12.4 million enrolled students<sup>1</sup> (Gillat-Karem, 1991; Rendon, 1995; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Haggard, & Terenzini, 1996), as well as complement the community with the hiring of more diverse employees (Chang, 2001; Gurin, 1999; Astin, 1993c; Kuh, 1995). This argument becomes relevant as Astin (1996a) characterizes those who succeed in higher education as students who establish bonds with those representatives of the college academic faculty, staff, and administrators. Yet while 85% of all community colleges are either located in or around urban environments,

---

<sup>1</sup> From "American Association of Community Colleges 2011 Fact Sheet," by American Association of Community Colleges, p.2. Copyright 2011

and the majority of all Black and Hispanic undergraduates in the United States attend these institutions, few have garnered multicultural cadres of administration or academic faculty. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, 76% of all staff employment at the community college self-identify as being White (American Association of Community Colleges). In fact, Jackson and Phelps (2004) indicate that as more administrators retire, very few positions are filled by ethnic minorities, specifically African-Americans.

This great disparity between the student/community clients and the population of those executive administrators creates an obstacle between understanding and cultivating a truly diverse campus environment; including distorting the ethnic reflection of the surrounding communities. This is not to ignore initiatives through hiring and promotion that community colleges have made to create more multicultural campuses (Weisman & Vaughn, 2002); but instead, this study seeks to understand the cultural negotiations of those ethnic minorities, specifically African-Americans, who have accepted the responsibility to stand as executive administrators and leaders on community college campuses.

### **Problem Statement**

As many community colleges face an increasing number of retiring executive administrators, there is an expressed need for replacing these retirees with candidates from a more diverse pool of academicians or practitioners, thereby accurately reflecting the populations that community colleges serve (Hockaday & Puryear, 2000; Shults, 2002). Many have concluded that a need for diversity in administrative and faculty positions still exists (Reyes, 1997; McNairy, 1996; Gordon, 1997). In fact, Opp (2002; 2001) explains that

one of the single-most powerful strategies to the successful retention and graduation of minority students is the institution's ability to hire faculty members and administrators of color. He further claims, using the involvement theory (Astin, 1993c; 1991), that it is the population of administrators and faculty members of color that draw the more diverse student populations, not the community or the social commissions imposed on the college itself. In addition to the special programs that an institution offers, one of the most influential characteristics of community college is to recruit and hire stakeholders who create a nurturing environment and culture that supports students' diversity. It is the culture of the institution, including the existence of plurality, welcomed diversity, and a sense of contribution, that often determines the success of the students (Weis, 1985; Trujillo & Diaz, 1999).

Considering that the change in personnel seeks to also broaden the perspectives and experiences of administrators, and therefore develop and enforce policies that are more pluralistic and beneficial to the campus climate, more administrators are being asked to provide input from different ethnic perspectives for an overall ideological revision. Yet one of the more prevalent criticisms that arises from African-American executive administrators, is that outside of issues concerning diversity and ethnicity, they many find themselves muted, ignored or expected to follow the mainstream's cultural view of the institution (Jones, 2000; Rolle, Davies, & Banning, 2000). This practice does not allow for full inclusion of "authentic" ethnicity, thereby continuing to foster a climate of exclusion and ignoring the commonly expressed goal of altruistic pluralism and diversity.

Without an exploring the role that authentic ethnicity plays in helping to shape an individual's cultural ideology, cognitive biases, and motivation for cultural development, the

need for diverse ethnic perspectives may never be fully understood. With one of the contemporary goals of the community college centering on improving diversity in staff employment, such an exploration of authenticity may assist in eliminating a nearly homogenous culture in community college leadership.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this ethnomethodological study is to acknowledge, interpret, and develop an understanding of the professional and personal strategies that some African-American community college chancellors, presidents, and other senior level administrators adopt in order to effectively serve as leaders in their institutions. In addition, this study will investigate the extent to which they form these strategies through identity development in order to maintain a connection to the cultural mainstream of an institution; foster respect among their peers, constituents, and boards of trustees; and secure continued employment. This study seeks to understand how they manage to meet the shifting demands of the community college mission, meet the needs of their clients and stakeholders, and offer a legitimate and contributing voice to their respective institutions, all while balancing their own authentic ethnicity and avoiding undue stress.

### **Research Questions**

More specifically, this study is driven by the following research questions:

1. How do African-American executive administrators in the community colleges view themselves as members of the governance team of the institution?

2. How do African-American administrators balance their public personas and their personal perceptions of race when attempting to execute the duties required by their position?
3. How does race and ethnicity contribute to the decision-making and policy-development that are created and enforced by African-American administrators in the community college?

### **Theoretical Framework**

For centuries, many social theorists have attempted to explore the peculiarities concerning racial identity and cultural practices of African-Americans. More specifically, they have attempted to explain the manner in which African-Americans have navigated their existence in the cultural mainstream. Their research is often specifically aimed at understanding the coping mechanisms that marginalized African-Americans have adopted following the legislative, institutional and socio-economic oppression of slavery, Jim Crow, and judicial inequity (DuBois, 1999; Washington, 1901; West, 1999; Bell, *And We Are Not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*, 1987).

African-Americans have a history unlike any other ethnic group in the United States. Dyson (2006) asserts because of the chattel slavery and discrimination that African-Americans were forced to endure beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the bitter taste of oppression, self-hatred and distrust still remains in the mouths of many individuals even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He insists that Blacks have interpreted and formed a distinct pattern of distrust into “rhythms, relations, and rules of race” (Dyson, 2006). He writes:

The tragic reign of slavery, the colossal efforts of the government and the legal system to extend white supremacy through Jim Crow law, and the monumental effort of black folk to resist these forces while redefining black identity have formed the rhythms, relations, and rules of race. The rhythms of race have largely to do with customs and cultural practices that feed on differences between racial groups. The relations of race have mostly to do with the conditions that foster or frustrate interactions between racial groups. The rules of race have to do with the norms and behavior that reflect or resist formal barriers to social equality (pp. 18-19).

So thus, the definition and perception of White America is often addressed with cautionary distrust that may stem from established patterns of frustration and betrayal, thereby creating a degree of tension between the two groups.

As Davis (2000) describes through the deconstruction of African-American literature, which is often deemed the acceptable voice of African-Americans (Favor, 1999; West, 1999), African-American perceptions of what is considered White are often steeped in very negative typology; which may explain the reasons why there remains so much tension between the two subcultures, or what some may insist the subculture and the mainstream. This is one reason why this study uses the Dubosian concept of *dual consciousness*, a trope in the literature that some regard an early psychological critique of African-American identity (Asante, 1980; Caldwell & Stewart, 2001; Cross, *Shades of Black: Diversity in African-American identity*, 1991; Hecht, Ribeau, & Alberts, 2004).

As Hecht, Ribeau & Alberts (2004) explain:

Expressive forms such as music, dance, and communication style link Afro-Americans to their cultural tradition while formal education, the media and the

need for economic survival exert pressure towards the mainstream. To balance these competing forces Afro-Americans, like other underrepresented groups, often live in two worlds. One conforms to the categories, labels and norms of the dominant group; the other interprets reality from an ethnic cultural filter (p. 123).

With an exploration of the cultural and historical dynamics between African-Americans and White Americans, researchers have uncovered evidence that the psychological assumptions that African-Americans make concerning economic survival throughout history may have affected, or even distorted, the manner in which they see themselves and their roles in a workforce that have been previously dominated by White Americans (Furnas, 1956; Allen, 2004). It is because of this self-knowledge and the desire to emancipate African-Americans from the prescriptive transformation of the White mainstream, that I have chosen to complete this study with the recognition of Critical Theory, initially presented by Jurgen Habermas (1972).

Habermas (1972) insists that knowledge through critical self-awareness can give rise to emancipatory action. In fact, the “emancipation is from libidinal, institutional or environmental forces which limit our options” (MacIsaac, 2002). This practice of self-awareness will not only allow African-Americans to retain and express their “authentic ethnicity” in the workforce, but also provide scholarly discourse to legitimize authentic blackness as a springboard for diversity in the community college.

### **Significance of the Study**

By conducting this qualitative inquiry of racial and cultural dynamics in leadership in post-secondary institutions, more insightful and rich narratives can contribute to the body of



literature that lacks an understanding of possible subliminal oppression that occurs between the dominate White culture, and within the traditionally disenfranchised African-American subculture (Davis, 2000; Dyson 2006; Asante 1980). This study will assist administrators in recognizing and identifying some of the obstacles that some African-Americans may encounter when attempting to be considered as integral and contributing participants in a governance team of an institution. This will lead to a conscious integration of ideas and strategies that may supplement or even counter traditional ideology; thereby, reconstructing an institutional culture which will encourage the growth of a truly diverse population of administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

### **Definitions**

*Code Switch: The term code switch was initially coined as a practice that described linguistic shifts between individuals and groups who attempted to communicate through a common language. This common language is derived from a linguistic repertoire which speakers accessed depending on the speech purpose, topic, and social relations (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977; Blom & Gumperz, 1972). More recently, it has been used as a popular culture term used to describe contemporary practices by ethnic minorities to temporarily defer, change, or alter speech, mannerisms, or otherwise personal cultural identifiers in order to assimilate with the dominate culture.*

*“Authentic” Blackness: A term used to describe the degree of ethnicity as it pertains to the legitimate adoption of acceptable African-American culture. Though every ethnic group establishes a paradigm that describes which practices or characteristics are deemed*

*“authentic”, historical context, language, and geographical migration has complicated the African-American definition of what or who is considered authentically Black. (Baraka, 1974; Favor, 1999; Johnson, 2003)*

*African-Americans: This complicated descriptor is used to characterize individuals who are born from African ancestry and gained naturalization and citizenry in the United States of America through the indentured and chattel servitude of those ancestors. The reader should not consider this definition to be inclusive of all people of African diaspora, as that term would also include persons whose experience may not reflect or even contradict the experiences of African-Americans.*

*Executive Administrators: Positions including, but not limited to, persons who hold titles as a chief executive officer (CEO), chancellor, or a college president and traditionally report directly to a board of trustees or directors. Other positions in executive administration that is will also be considered in that they report directly to the CEO and often serve on the college cabinet or advisory committees are often identified as vice presidents, campus presidents, or provosts.*

### **Summary**

The goal of this study is to gain an understanding of how African-American executive administrators in the community college balance their authentic ethnicity with the expectations of their boards of trustees, executive administrative teams, or the cultural mainstream of an institution.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature that relates to the topics of the study, while also providing a historical context for the reader to follow. Because of the deeply rooted history of African-American assimilatory practices, the literature review is not exhaustive. Instead, it will primarily provide a broad platform for historical discourse with a more comprehensive summary of contemporary theories and observations.

Chapter Three describes the methodology and methods used to complete this study. To fortify goodness and trustworthiness, in this chapter I have included a rationale for the qualitative approach as well as a detailed justification for the manner in which the study is constructed. My epistemological stance, my rationale for participant selection, and my primary methods of data collection are detailed in this chapter.

Chapter Four will present the findings of the study including the emerging themes from my participant observations, interviews, and other pertinent data collected during the study.

Chapter Five will describe the recurring themes for higher education and the community college, as well as a brief analysis of each theme.

Chapter Six will include a brief summary of the research, the answers to the three research questions that guide the study; implications and recommendations for further research; and finally a personal reflection on the methods, findings, and themes

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter is a summation of the pivotal theories and previous research that presents a concise view of the issues that are discussed in later chapters. Though every attempt has been made to provide an exhaustive list of literature that addresses an ever-evolving field of research, every study of community colleges is not addressed in this literature review. Instead, this chapter exists as a literary foundation to contextualize the issues related to my research which includes: a description the community college mission, a call for diversity and significant changes to accommodate diversity, the explanation of the systematic oppression that marginalized individuals either accept or deny, and a detail of sociological models of African-American identity.

### **The Community College Mission**

The history of the American community college does not parallel with most four-year colleges or universities. As chronicled by several theorists (Roueche, Roueche, & Johnson, 2002; Brint & Karabel, 1991; Levin J., 2000), the modern community college grew from the evolution of the junior colleges and their need to satisfy specific requests from the surrounding communities. In addition, they were spawned to address the shift in the traditional educational agenda (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

The seminal work by Cohen and Brawer, *The American Community College* (2008), describes the community college as an institution that addresses the need for accessible education, as well as an institution that provides several solutions to some of social problems in American society. According to Cohen and Brawer, the comprehensive community

college's mission roots itself in workforce development, community education, student services, developmental education and transfer preparation which may involve a number of academic initiatives that promote healthy support and opposing debate.

This literature review begins by illustrating how community colleges, initially identified as junior colleges, have supplemented their primary foci of providing skill development curriculum to the community and providing supplemental lower education to the nation's four-year colleges or universities, to include a more diverse and multifaceted mission for altruistic learning. In addition to providing traditional education to the masses, in recent years the community college was also commissioned and expected to provide services that included cultural and recreational enlightenment for the surrounding community. Cohen and Brawer (2008) identify examples of nonacademic curricula and community activities such as the offering of driver education courses, theatrical performances, as well as providing a medium for public lectures. These changes also include adopting more strategies for student retention, developing new programs for academic success, and fostering and nurturing environments that are more sensitive to the needs of ethnically diverse student populations. All of these new strategies provide prime opportunities for these institutions of higher learning to showcase the talents and richness of diverse leadership teams.

Levin and Montero-Hernandez (2009) describe this dynamic in the community college as a natural and unique fulcrum between "the individual, the organizational, and the societal levels of analysis" (p. 13). To assess the effectiveness of the institution, this balance has to recognize and support the importance of the faculty, the organizational dynamics that are created to complement these interactions, the shift in organizational and individual ideologies as a result of this changing dynamics, and the opportunity that the institution can

offer to the participant or student (p. 13). According to Roueche, Roueche and Johnson (2002), it is this organizational and individual theory that describes the evolution of the community college. Specifically, in some geographical regions, community colleges embrace authentic identity to regularly combat social conflicts, such as racial segregation, while simultaneously promoting ethnic solidarity and diversity (Fujimoto, 1999).

### **Urban Missions**

As an example of how community colleges promote diversity, Fujimoto (1999) explains how the Los Angeles Community College District often uses its nine colleges as institutions that exist as supportive public resources for the rapidly changing urban environment. While following the basic tenets outlined in previous editions of Cohen and Brower (2008), Fujimoto explores and chronicles the historical evolution that Los Angeles community colleges have experienced in response to the changes in the demographics of their clients.

As the profile of the student changed, the curriculum changed as well. Fujimoto explains how the district adopted English-language preparation courses through the English Language Institute to meet the increasing English as a Second Language (ESL) and Second Language (L-2) students. Though one of the main objectives of this curriculum shift was to improve the access of the college for students, it was also used as a means to connect with the community and serve as a representation of how the district is not just an institution of learning, but also a steward of the local citizens.

In addition to the curriculum changes, the district also established entire institutions to serve specific ethnic populations. In fact, Los Angeles Southwest College was opened in

response to the Watts riots of 1965 and subsequently provided an “opportunity for upward mobility for African-Americans”(p. 58). Fujimoto provides ample examples of how the urban community college responds to the diversity issues that several colleges will continue to face in light of the growing minority population in the United States.

### **Community College Baccalaureate**

In addition to creating special institutions within community colleges, several community colleges have also aligned themselves with competing colleges and universities by offering 2+2 programs and undergraduate baccalaureate degrees (Floyd, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Walker, 2001). As explained in the literature presented by Floyd (2006), the community college baccalaureate (CCB) continues to follow the tradition of providing evolutionary education that remains an appropriate pathway for large populations of students. These growing numbers of community college baccalaureates exist through several institutions as a direct response to the needs of the immediate community and states.

As popular as the community college baccalaureate has been in states like Florida, even researchers such as Dougherty (1991; 1992) who openly criticize the use of the CCB suggest that the community college should continue to use the 2+2 programming strategy that commits to transfer articulation and diverse programming. In turn, he insists that such programming will assist those students from traditionally marginalized communities.

Though the 2+2 programs that Dougherty mentions provides transfer opportunities for community college students into four-year institutions, as Levin (2000) explains, a definite shift has occurred in the community college to include even a stronger emphasis on training for employment and the economic needs of business and industry. Levin believes

that the mission of the community college at the end of the twentieth century was more suited to the support of the global economy; providing the U.S. with opportunities to expand their influence in technical and continuing education. In addition, Walker (2001) praises the student-centered environment, the diverse population and the affordability of the community college as an optimal environment for workforce development in global economy.

Though some have attempted to characterize the community college as a vehicle solely used to provide students a transition from high school to college, clearly the literature suggests that the responsibilities of the community college are as diverse and vast as the populations that they serve (Bailey, 2002; Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

### **Mission Revision**

Because of the multiple expectations of the community college, it may be time for a revision of the mission as described in Cohen and Brawer's *American Community College* (2008). In the fifth and latest edition of their chronicle and assessment of the community college, the description of the community college's goals details the traditional three tiers of vocational education, transfer preparation, and remedial education; however, as the needs of a more global community are also addressed, many theorists propose that a more inclusive and pluralistic community college needs to transcend the traditional institutional ideology of only serving its immediate community (Gillat-Karem, 1991; Maxwell, et al., 2003; Brint & Karabel, 1991; Levin, 2000).

The American Council on International Intercultural Education (1996) defines this strategy as one that will promote a "global competency that exists only when a learner understands the interrelatedness of people and systems...and celebrate[s] the richness and



benefits of this diversity” (p. 4). More specifically, the globally-competent learner is described as one who is aware of diversity, commonalities and interdependence. If more educators recognize students as being ideal, then we would most certainly have to redefine who we view or accept as scholarly diverse at all levels of education.

Dellow (2002), former president of Broome Community College of New York, insists that more programs that involve and showcase international activities and cultures, coupled with a significant shift in academic relations involving more intense study abroad programs and foreign language studies, will dramatically change not only the community college, but also produce more culturally cognizant and sensitive students, faculty, and executive leadership.

The changing populations of community colleges, specifically in urban environments, almost demand a revision of the curriculum to contribute to the larger social issue of access and economic viability among minority students. In several studies, the needs of African-American students are specifically addressed and identified as they are viewed as being exceptionally challenging due to historical academic conditions and oppressive practices including ethnic tracking and steering (Brint & Karabel, 1989; 1991; Maxwell, et al., 2003). As some have uncovered (Bronstein, 1993; Dougherty, 1991, 1992), the practice of the community college steering African-Americans and other ethnic minorities into curriculums pursuant of vocational-technical careers rather than transfer education seems to reflect a ideology of an antiquated sort.

Though an ideological revision is compelled to include a change in curriculum, Maxwell et al. (2003) explain that such a change has to also be spearheaded by diverse faculty and administrators. According to the 2003 study, people in key positions such as

college presidents should help form the policies that support the initiative of catering to the students that they serve. More specifically, a need exists for more diverse advocates of the community college who will recognize, appreciate, and nurture the cultural capital that minority populations offer (Levin, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Miller, 1990), while even countering the misconceptions and general stereotypes of minority ethnic culture (Delgado, 1998; Bell, 1987).

Moreover, several theorists and researchers (Opp & Smith, 1996; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Opp & Smith, 1994) have sought to answer the question of how can the community college perform their operations of meeting a diverse population, and providing training and exposure to a global community, without the successful recruitment and retention of a diverse cadre of faculty members and administration?

## **Retirements**

In the midst of this mission revision, an American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) survey purports that 79% of community college presidents plan to retire by the year 2012, which also reflects the general trend of most executive administrators and faculty members (Shults, 2001). This anticipated mass departure of so many executive administrators in such a short period of time is an anticipated challenge the community college faces as enrollment grows and surrounding communities and industries become more dependent on the educational flexibility and access provided by such colleges.

In addition, Weisman and Vaughn (2006) also reported that data collected in a later AACC survey indicated that despite the successes of the community college and the contributions they make to higher education, 85% of community college administrators are

aging and near retirement. Though the elder administrators in any institution bring a wealth of institutional wisdom and knowledge to the board and curriculum meetings (Thaxter & Graham, 1999), according to Young (1996), a breadth of avant garde innovation is also born from the diversity of a younger perspective that includes technology and diversity. Young states, “In view of today's needs, the challenge of providing administrative leadership for two-year colleges exists in a vastly different social milieu than that of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s” (p. 6). This aging of administrators may eventually compound the problem of the absent leaders.

While Weisman and Vaughn (2006) predict that this mass exodus of executive administrators may leave a void in the leadership pipeline, compounded by the resounding call for diversity, globalized education, and an ideological revision, even now recent recruitment and hiring of community college leaders does not seem to include ethnic minorities (Boggs, 2003; Shults C., 2002). As Boggs reports, the need for replacing retirees with administrators who reflect the population that they serve is key to the continued success of the community college. Boggs writes:

community colleges have not been as effective as they need to be in diversifying their leadership by ethnicity...The question is whether the capacity exists or can be built to prepare new faculty and administrators who are representative of the population, who will understand the unique mission of the community colleges, and who have the skills to lead these institutions into the future. (p. 16)

Does this include African-Americans and other ethnic minorities? Weisman and Vaughn purport that though there has been a steady increase in the appointments of women

executives in the community college; from 11% to 28% between 1993 and 1993, during the period of 1996 and 2002, the hiring of ethnic minorities has remained stagnant at 14%.

Recently as 2008, through a doctoral dissertation Stubbes' (2008) profile of the female college president reaffirms the previous research on the "graying" of the community college senior leaders, as well as the stagnation of diversity. Yet the research also affirms that "the older the individuals are when they obtain their first presidency, the better prepared they appear to be" (p. 117).

### **Call for Diversity**

The failure to increase the number of ethnic minorities is alarming to some, including Jackson and Phelps (2004) whose review of IPEDS data sets confirms that the representative ratio of African-American executive leaders to students in the year 1999 was reported at 0.64, while the White counterparts remained in the lead at 1.38. This means that very few African-American students are encountering executive administrators of the same ethnic heritage, thereby preventing them from establishing minority role models in administration. The study also provides credible findings and implications that support the theory that an institution should subscribe to structural diversity throughout every level at the institution, including those in leadership roles (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Astin, 1993).

Jackson and Phelps' (2004) findings insist that "greater representation of people of color among top-level administrative positions" will continue to provide a warm and welcoming environment for students of color. They find that by attending and working in colleges that embrace racial diversity, the "students, faculty and academic leaders of the institution are exposed to *structural diversity*" (p. 80). It is the structural diversity that will

enhance and insure that this steward of society, the community college, will not only continue to provide a high caliber of instructional programs, but also accurately reflect the student population that they serve. This will assist them in combating the stressors that affect student development (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993; Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999).

The contact that some students make with members of the same ethnic group seems to be very important according to Cohen and Brawer (2003). Yet as some analysts have described the African-American success rates in the community college as less than stellar when compared to the persistence and graduation rates of those who may attend a senior institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), Blau (1999) explains that certain minimal accommodations that institutions make for African-Americans students can exponentially improve their chances of success. These changes include improving and adopting strategic plans for improving structural diversity in programming and staffing.

As an example of how structural diversity is implemented, Mason's model (1998) used at Kennedy-King College in Chicago provided a combination of on-site childcare, peer mentoring, and career counseling that tremendously improved the chances of African-American success. This model addresses the common socioeconomic challenges that all students face; however, it also attempts to recognize and find solutions to the additional challenges facing students of color. According to Mason's Model, such challenges or obstacles to earning a college degree for African-Americans stem primarily from racism; lack of academic preparedness; low self-confidence; scant family support; and oftentimes, cultural disconnection.

In addition, Kunjufu (2002 as cited in Lewis & Middleton, 2003) explains that African-American students, like all others, want to be like people they see. The connection that students make with role models and the influence of each role model on retention is extremely important. This literature supports the findings of Jackson and Phelps (2004) as the call for diversity in the community college has been loud and resounding, yet seems to still be an issue that demands more research.

### **Historical Assimilation of African-Americans in Education**

As a number of theorists and demographers report (Astin A., 1993; Floyd, 2006; Gillat-Karem, 1991), a purposeful inclusion of ethnic minorities in administration and faculty, including African-Americans, is beneficial and necessary to appeal to the growing population of minority students, the recent globalization agenda, and the overall cultural capital of the community college. Yet as one deconstructs the cultural dynamics and relationships of African-Americans, such an analysis will uncover very intriguing and deeply rooted historical issues concerning race and identity, which collectively contribute to the contemporary discussion of educational revision and inclusion. Historically, early American statespersons, politicians, and cultural theorists such as Abraham Lincoln (1909), Frederick Douglass (1998), W.E.B. DuBois (1999), and Marcus Garvey (1969), have posed the question of how African-Americans fit in the cultural mainstream. All have expressed some concern over the position of African-Americans during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The question of how the African-American assimilates with the American educational mainstream continues to be pronounced in the historical rhetoric expressed by Booker T. Washington in his *Address to the Atlanta Exposition* (1895). In his address, he calls for then

African-Americans to “cast down your bucket where you are” and establish a meaningful position in American society through assimilation, rather than opposing it through colonization. He assures his White counterpart that by allowing full inclusion of African-Americans in the educational arena, they would insure a future of a less threatening African-American as one of “the most patient, faithful, law-abiding and unresentful people that the world has seen.”

Washington (1895) asserts that full inclusion of African-Americans in the American mainstream would foster a degree of mutualism by “self-realization” or emancipation. As contributing members of the workforce and regular consumers of American commerce, African-Americans would earn citizenship as they mastered a vocational education: learning to live by their hands. Washington’s solution to the racial conflicts in this nation teetered on African-Americans’ understanding and accepting their positions in society, even if it meant that they were to remain subservient to White America. During his address, he explicitly warns African-American former slaves of the dangers that may incur by neglecting to examine their natural position:

Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the

bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities. (pp 220-221)

In all, this address called for the equality of the African-American to come to fruition by education which may seem logical to some. Yet W.E.B. DuBois, who instead viewed “education as a pathway to equality” as limiting, meets Washington’s call for assimilation with staunch opposition. He states:

If we make money the object of man-training, we shall develop money-makers but not necessarily men; if we make technical skill the object of education, we may possess artisans but not, in nature, men. Men we shall have only as we make manhood the object of the work of the schools—intelligence, broad sympathy, knowledge of the world that was and is, and of the relation of men to it—this is the curriculum of that Higher Education which must underlie true life. (DuBois W., 1903)

His rhetoric was often reiterated by the separatist Marcus Garvey (1923), who often characterized Washington supporters as educated African-Americans whose slave instincts had not departed; moreover, who “are unable to see themselves creators of their own needs...[instead] can only exist through the good graces of their masters” (1969, p. 25).

As Washington’s address made its impact through the agrarian African-American South and industrialized North, W.E.B. Dubois simultaneously examined the very different emotional and psychological assessment of race relations. His psychoanalytic explanation of the double consciousness or the psychic duality that African-Americans have been forced to endure, remains pertinent in examining their psychological stressors.



The idea of assimilation with, and dependence on the White mainstream, fueled a historical argument in the African-American educational community at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Yet the underlying debate over assimilation and inclusion in education has still remained very volatile in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> and present 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The debate of the concerns of how the African-American may fit in higher education has been addressed, but because the research is very thin in discussing some of the fundamental reasons of limited access, most theorists find that the exclusion is based on very generalized hypotheses such as racism (Cox, 1993), lack of communication (Myers, 2000), and lack of respect for diversity (Guillory, 2001). African-Americans recognize these obstacles to full inclusion as stressors that not only affect their job performance, but also their mental stability (Brown, 2003; DuBois W. , 1999).

Historically, DuBois (1903) explains that this adaptive behavior gives birth to one of the more “peculiar sensations” that African-Americans regularly encounter. He states that it is the feeling they get from balancing the expectations of the dominant culture, while also remaining authentic to oneself and subculture. He asserts that a stressful competition can ensue from these two opposing cultural subscriptions if the subject is not cognizant of the dynamic. Conversely, if the subject is aware of the roles that they must play, this “double-consciousness” may be a beneficial tool that can be used to recognize one’s own talents and value, while simultaneously transcending racial oppression:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,--an American, a Negro; two warring souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring

ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (1999, p. 45)

Collectively, both Washington and DuBois established an American firmament for African-American 20<sup>th</sup> century self-examination and realization. Though many scholars may question whether identity models find their roots in early American race discussions, none can dispute the contributions that historical figures such as DuBois and Washington have made to understanding the psychological effects that racial identity has had on both Black and White Americans.

The convoluted and complex topic of racial identity continues to haunt the African-American community partly because of the contradicting discourse presented by so many theorists. Though many argue that a general Afrocentric ideology will give rise to equal access and contribute to the recognition of cultural capital offered by African-Americans (Asante, 1980; Akbar, 1984; West, 1999; Smiley, 2006), others still suggest that full inclusion and equal access for African-Americans is present and available today. To suggest something different only feeds the paranoia of oppression and eventually subscribes to the cult of victimization of African-Americans (McWhorter, 2000; 2004).

Despite the position that the reader may assume, many African-Americans, specifically in higher education administration, still seem to be oppressed according to Caldwell and Stewart (2001). They assert that though access and opportunity is much better than years ago, the nature of the oppression to “fit in” still remains in the forefront of the minds of most African-American administrators. Because of the perceived need to “fit in”, African-Americans are unique in the stressors that they attempt to overcome as they modify their natural speech patterns, suppress cultural symbols, and seek approval from Eurocentric

interpretations (p. 227) are often the exact behavior modifications that prevent them from being “authentically ethnic” --- preventing them from contributing cultural capital to the academic community.

In the more contemporary arena of the community college, Caldwell and Stewart (2001) explain that the stress of having to not only meet the demands of the positions held, but also remain authentically ethnic, fosters a hostile psychological environment which will eventually lead to self preservation by the administrator through either attempting to leave the profession, or by developing “a cadre of culturally disengaged, self-serving, deraciated academic elitists colloquially known as ‘Uncle Tom’s,’ ‘sell outs,’ or ‘player haters’”(p. 229). Furthermore, Stewart asserts that if African-American administrators do not effectively balance DuBois’ “double-consciousness”, the numbers of multiculturally diverse administrators will continue to fall, while systematically subscribing to a Eurocentric epistemological perspective.

Such a perspective is explored and characterized by Bernal and Villalpando (2002). This perspective is a tool used to ignore or discredit the cultural capital and knowledge of a minority population with differing views, through what is coined an “apartheid of knowledge”: one that hegemonically bestows on a person, a system of collective opportunities and benefits, while ignoring others. According to Levin and Montero-Hernandez (2009), it is not enough for the existence of diversity institution to precipitate chance; instead, it is the acknowledgment and communication of diverse opinions and perceptions that encourages progression.

For some White Americans, the need for multicultural or diverse communities may not be as relevant because what is deemed “standard American culture” has been silently and

intentionally constructed from their racial, ethnic and cultural frameworks. Yet for many minority subcultures, including the African-American subculture, there is an unfortunate need to balance against or assimilate with the mainstream (Helms, 1994).

Educational systems are not immune to this oppressive dynamic no more than any other systematic entity in our society. As an example of an educational system that subconsciously benefits Whites, Evans (1971) suggests that African-Americans who eventually earn administrative positions are not only faced with obstacles rooted in discrimination and isolation, but they are also systematically placed in positions that marginally benefit the university or the college. Though very little literature is published that attempts to describe the characteristics of African-American administrators, Evans explains that the African-American administrator is usually selected and hired to “generally address to some phase of special programs” which are short-lived, based in diversity, and sometimes underfunded (p. 98). This lays the foundation for subsequent research that seeks to explain the absence of African-American administrators in higher education.

Several subsequent studies (Wagstaff & Moore, 1974; Anderson, Frierson, & Lewis, 1979; Smith & Witt, 1993) support Evans as they attempt to detail the disproportioned numbers of African-American administrators in student services. Later, as Jackson (2001) explains, quite often the African-American administrator is steered into directorships of TRIO programs that are considered student-affairs based rather than the academic affairs based positions that lead to the more “top level positions such as president or provost” (p. 94). This may in turn limit their exposure to others outside of the academe.

Yet simultaneously, several other researchers have found that African-American administrators want to work with a more diverse population of students, but without their

race playing such a major role in their advancement (Jones, 2000; Kunjufu, 2002; Lewis & Middleton, 2003). These administrators are often met with even more stressors by either being perceived as the “token hire” (Bronstein, 1993), placed in a position of power without the traditional benefits of mentoring (Blackwell, 1989; Sutherland, 1990), or burdened with heavy service loads (Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Whichever the case, once again the literature fails to address the characteristics and coping mechanisms that African-American administrators may exhibit, utilize or harbor when they are in an executive position.

### **Identity Models for African-Americans**

Several questions have always been posed when discussing the perception or legitimacy of the existence and impact of racism. As an example, there are critics (Harriss, 1989; Lorde, 2009) who do not acknowledge the impact of racism on African-Americans, and rarely consider such occurrences unique when compared to other forms of oppression and discrimination, primarily homophobia or gender inequities. While they refuse to view racial oppression different from any other form of oppression, they do acknowledge that the maintenance of any hierarchical structure exists as a means to fracture the oppressed. Others have readily accepted the definition and existence of this extension of group dominance theory, by admitting that the hierarchy of oppression

...is driven by systematic institutional and individual discrimination. That is many social institutions (e.g., schools, organized religions, marriage practices, financial houses) and many powerful individuals disproportionately allocate desired goods...to members of dominant and privileged groups, while directing undesirable

things...toward members of less powerful groups. (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004, p. 847)

These same theorists explain that such a hierarchy is evident by the example that “members dominant groups (e.g., European Americans), because of their privileged positions within the social hierarchy, tend to have higher levels of social dominance orientation than do members of subordinate groups (e.g., African-Americans)” (p. 850). It is my position that because of this recognition on the behalf of a great number of African-Americans, the same population begins to reshape its identities to confront this hierarchy as an attempt to survive.

### **Cross’ Model of Nigrescence**

One of the theories addressing the identity of African-Americans is explained through Cross’ model of Nigrescence (1971; 1991; 1995). It is through the subscription of this theory that several social scientists have attempted to understand the development of African-American identity and the “process of becoming Black” (1971) of students. Even though Cross’ primary focus is on students, much like this study, Cross systematically explores (1995) the sociohistorical foundation of African-American identity through the examination of how African-Americans have continued a cycle of shedding and adopting one identifier after another; all in an attempt to define who they are and how they may navigate in American society.

The two typology Nigrescence Patterns are persons identified as A and B depending on how they have developed their identities. The Pattern A typology, which most African-Americans adopt, “refers to a way in which a person may develop a Black [African-American] identity [or identities] as a consequence of her or his formative socialization

experiences, from infancy through late adolescence” (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001, p. 243). Pattern B, which the remaining of African-Americans experience, is dependent on identity conversion in later adult years, produced by experiences and education where “persons may achieve Blackness” (p. 260). Yet regardless of the pattern, both produce individuals who adopt varying degrees of Blackness ranging from “moderate to high saliance to race” (p. 260).

Cross’ model also introduces five stages of development. Stage 1, *Pre-Encounter*, describes a person’s view as stemming from a Eurocentric perspective without the recognition of Blackness. It is a pre-metamorphosis stage which is eventually influenced by a person’s experiences. Stage 2 is the *Encounter* stage which is directly impacted *during* the person’s experiences. It describes the encounters which “destabilize” the present identity to form the new one (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001, p. 244). Stage 3 is identified as the *Immersion-Emersion* which describes the process by which an individual begins to sort through their encounters to shape their new identities or awareness of Blackness. This phase is the beginning of the decoding process of what it means to be Black or African-American (1991). As it can be a time both of personal growth and recognition that Black role models ‘operate from a more advanced state of identity’” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 26) emerging as a new individual. Stage 4 is the *Internalization* stage which allows for the individual to process their experiences and shape their new identities. It is the finalization stage of the individual where the new identity identities are accepted and personalized. Stage 5 is the *Internalization-Commitment* period where the individual has accepted the new identities and then joined with others to advocate for African-American concerns and problems which may include “history and culture” (Cross, 1971).

### **Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity**

Though many contemporary scholars have explored the dynamic of race identity, one comprehensive exploration can be viewed through the *Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI)* (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Unlike Cross' *Model of Nigrescence* (1971; 1991) which previously compartmentalizes African-American identity into 5 stages, MMRI describes a qualitative framework of ideological tropes through which African-Americans begin and continue to define their identity in a private and public reality. It is this model that attempts to deconstruct African-American identity to reveal the very foundation for some of the strategies employed by those wishing to assimilate with or counter the American mainstream. MMRI seeks to explore the source of this volatility as well as interpret how African-Americans navigate this complex dynamic of identity.

Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, (1998) assume that racial identity teeters on the fulcrums of two questions: (1) How important is race in the individual's perceptions of self? and (2) What does it mean to be a member of this racial group? MMRI responds to these two questions by making the following assumptions about identity in general: (1) the environment and contextual cues constantly influences behavior, including adaptiveness; (2) individuals assume multiple identities which are heirarchically ordered; (3) in American society, race cannot be ignored as contributing factor in either self-reflexive or projected perceptions of individuals; and lastly (4) MMRI is "concerned with the status of an individual's racial identity as opposed to its development" as Cross explores in *Nigrescence* (p. 24). This last purpose links itself securely with the research questions of this study. I am not looking to understand how African-American administrators have developed their skills;



only how they maintain their positions as if they are valued as a representative of an ethnically diverse subculture.

After the assumptions, MMRI proposes “four dimensions of racial identity that address both the significance and the qualitative meaning of race in the self-concepts of African-Americans” (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998, p. 24). These are illustrated in the schematic below.

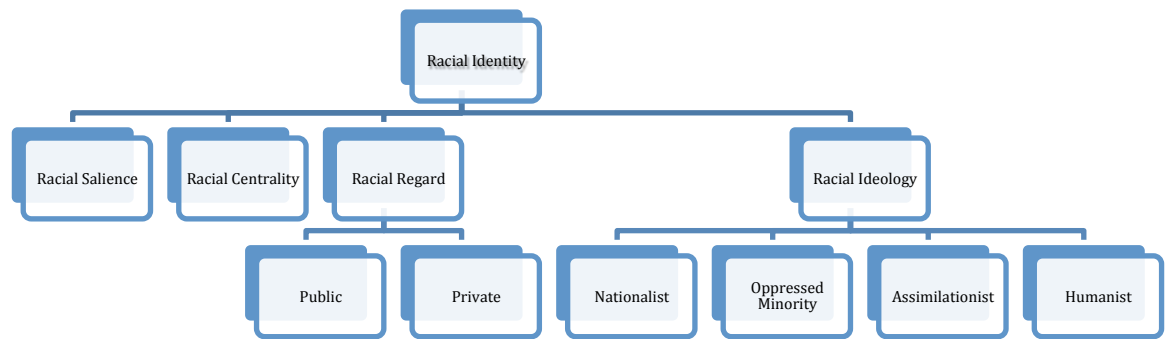


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the Multidimensional model of racial identity. Adapted from “Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity: A Reconceptualization of African-American Racial Identity,” by R. Sellers, M. Smith, J. Shelton, S. Rowley, T. Chavous, 1998, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2 (1) p.24. Copyright 1998 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

The model of MMRI condenses decades of racial identity research into a simplified concept that illustrates the construction and conceptualization of racial identity. According to MMRI (1998), racial identity is supported by two pillars of awareness, separated into four different categories. The first pillar is self-reflexive in that it attempts to uncover how people view themselves while establishing their racial identity. It consists of the *salience* and *centrality*.

Salience is relevant as it helps to describe how one views their own identity during one particular period in time, or in response to a distinct conflict or situation. Racial salient responses vary from person to person depending on their experiences, perceptions and how they interpret different conflicts. The authors assert that salience is a “result of influence of

situational cues, salience is very dynamic and can change from event to event” (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998, p. 25). This attempts to explain why some African-Americans can view a conflict as racist, while others view it as harmless.

Centrality also addresses the self-reflexive nature of personal identity or personal construct theory (Kelly as cited in Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Here theorists have described the nature of identity through an “individual’s normative perceptions” (p. 25) Unlike salience which relies upon an event, situation or conflict to give rise to personal identity, centrality spawns from a person’s hierarchy of several identities, which may help in defining who they are.

MMRI is important to understand as it offers preemptive answers to questions addressing a person’s reflexive experiences. It has contextualized the dynamic relationship between identity and the hierarchy of oppression. It also has addressed the question of why racism is not a constant experience for all involved.

This question can be answered through a number of theories, but none so effectively than Critical Race Theory (CRT). Collectively with identity theories, CRT attempts to address questions concerning the navigation of racial expectations, oppression on the basis of race, and the richness that racial diversity and cultural competencies may add to any given society, especially in higher education.

For centuries, many social theorists have attempted to explore the peculiarities that race relations have exhibited in American society (Asante, 1980; Delgado, 1995; Dyson, 2006; McWhorter, 2000 ; hooks,1993). More specifically, they have attempted to explain the manner in which Black Americans have navigated their existence in the cultural mainstream of the United States. Their research is more specifically aimed at understanding the coping

mechanisms that marginalized Black Americans have adopted following the legislative, institutional and socio-economic oppression of slavery, Jim Crow, and judicial inequity. Once again it is often the African-American history of exclusion that drives both the negative and appealing perception of White America.

As Davis (2000) describes through the deconstruction of African-American literature, which is often deemed the voice of African-Americans (Favor, 1999; West, 1999), African-American perceptions of what is considered White are often steeped in very negative typology, which may explain the reasons why there remains so much tension between the two subcultures; or what some may insist the subculture and the mainstream.

### **Social Stressors**

One of the prominent characteristics of DuBois' psychic duality is the warning of the stress that accompanies the double consciousness. He writes, "From the double life every American Negro must live, as a Negro and as an American,...from this must arise a painful self-consciousness, an almost morbid sense of personality and moral hesitancy which is fatal to self-confidence." Brown's study of mental health and epidemiology has been a topic that has accompanied the study of racial identity as some of the pivotal literature from sociologists and political theorists presumed that oppression and social pressures that Blacks have faced in America could negatively impact their mental health.

Brown (2003) compiles several theories presented by scholars in multiple fields to address five mental "problems that are most prevalent and impairing" (p. 295). They are described as (1) nihilistic tendencies, (2) anti-self issues, (3) suppressed anger suppression,

(4) delusional denial tendencies and (5) extreme racial paranoia. His study incorporates CRT because the methodology emphasizes what racial stratification means and how it operates.

According to Brown, “this theoretical tradition can contribute to the sociology of mental health by describing emotional problems produced by racial stratification, problems that often transcend standard conceptions of mental health” (p. 293) This research is extremely important because it provides sociological and etiologic evidence that racial stratification can negatively affect the mental health of not only African-Americans, but also White Americans.

In addition to the Brown study, Dixon and Rousseau (2005) also contribute to the body of literature by reviewing the seminal publications that scholars in education have written in describing their experience with using Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework. The authors initially lay the cornerstone of their literature review by reviewing the popular study completed by Laden-Billings and Tate (1995) that theorizes the dynamic of white privilege. The study described such privileges as they are maintained in education through divisive techniques such as tracking, de facto segregation and blatant resegregation. They uncover social problems such as isolation, racism, unsuccessful attempts at “color-blindness” and other themes that are concurrent with this critical methodology.

### **Emancipation**

One such theme is the study and exploration of voting habits and political influence of African-Americans. Guinier and Torres (2002) characterizes the stress experienced by African-Americans as being much more than a symptom of that particular community. Instead, they view the stress that African-Americans encounter, along with other ethnic

minorities, as barometers of the political health of our democracy here in the United States. Guinier and Torres admit that CRT can adopt a discouraging perspective of how the public views race relations. Yet by using the analogy of a canary in the coal mines, Guinier and Torres create a more insightful parable which describes how ethnic minorities can contribute through group consciousness to a more streamline and effective tool for emancipation of a particular subgroup, as well as the advancement for the entire population. They describe the activism adopted by the Black church during the Civil Rights Movement as an example of how group consciousness can move an entire nation:

Religious associations that link the individual to a community of people who share a common culture or similar experiences can also engender feeling of political efficacy. Contrary to those who view religion as a conservative force to accommodate believers to the status quo, Harris finds that the cognitive, discursive, and cultural resources of the black church are as important as its institutional networks for social movement and political mobilization. (p. 80)

This discourse brings solutions for American racism to the forefront of CRT. Though it may be in direct contradiction to another pillar of CRT, which describes racism as a habitual, unavoidable trope in American society (Delgado & Stephancic, 2001; Bell, 1987; Taylor, 1998; West, 1999), several recent pieces of scholarly literature have provided practical solutions to avoid infecting emerging generations.

Yosso (2005) insists that if mainstream America would only recognize the cultural wealth that ethnic minorities harbor in their communities, that racism could be challenged effectively. Yosso explains that marginalized groups are often unrecognized for what skills they do contribute and exhibit in their own subcultures. She initially begins to explore the

definition and traditional uses of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as it relates to legal studies and the sociological interpretative uses it can have on society as a whole. Eventually, CRT can be used to assist educators in (1) determining and eventually eliminating their own cultural biases in the classroom, and (2) encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to express themselves in very different ways to challenge dominant culture. A central theme in Yosso's research is the presentation of a model of cultural capital that stems from 6 pillars of linguistic, resistant, navigational, social, familial, and aspirational capital.

Linguistic capital is such that includes "the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style" (p.78). More recently the English-only debates have challenged the acknowledgment of such capital when it addresses the use of Spanish. What is surprising is that while other languages such as the Indo-European dialects (excluding Spanish) are considered exotic and romantic, there seems to be a great deal of resistance to regard Spanish as the same. This brings into question the inclusive citizenship regardless of race that is promised to all immigrants. This same idea can be readily applied to the resistance of Black English Vernacular (BEV) as it also meets regular opposition and denial despite its lexicon and consistent syntax.

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to retain certain goals and aspirations while combating racial barriers (p. 77). In fact, such barriers may come into existence through the form of social institutions that are not traditionally welcoming of persons of color. The negotiation can link aspirational capital with resistant and navigational culture. This maintains a connection with the goals despite the obstacle that minorities may encounter. In any event, all six components have the potential to, if recognized, combat racism and the traditional privileging of White culture.

In addition to Yosso's studies, more recent research presented by Tillman (2002) also seeks to explain the importance of "culturally sensitive research of the African-American perspective" in education. According to the author, as we become a more pluralistic society and recognize that ethnic minorities have traditionally been marginalized in research, the need for more sound qualitative and interpretative inquiries such as this one, needs to be made in order to give those ethnic groups a voice. The author finds that the stories that African-Americans can offer are particularly valuable in that they have historically experienced "scholarly alienation."

### **Future Directions**

Earlier in this review, I explored the foundational literature by Habermas and DuBois that set out to not only inform the reader of potentially oppressive situations, but to also include the other objective of any critical theory: to emancipate the groups through such education. More recently, Patton, McEwen, Rendon, and Howard-Hamilton (2007) explored how such emancipation can take place through education and enlightenment on the campuses of institutions of higher learning. According to Patton et al., race relations can be improved through exposure and education led by a coordinated effort between administrators in student services and faculty members in the classroom. The literature suggests that college administrators can move beyond the status quo by employing race programs that recognize something other than what is considered "normal." It is also recommended that education professionals be knowledgeable of their own positions and cultural contribution that their own racial identities may make to the greater good of the society and the student. It is

through their own cultural awareness and self-reflection that emancipation for the student, as well as the administrator, can come to fruition.

### **Conclusion**

Though CRT provides a framework for research in judicial studies, higher education, sociology, and psychology, the literature is multifaceted when seeking to use it as a single framework for this particular study. It is at the intersection of African-American identity theories and CRT that the foundation of this study is set. Because of the complex dynamics of self-identification based on racism, ethnicity, cultural capital, and hegemonic privileging, I am now afforded an opportunity to explore many different tropes to review in my study. Just as there are many different forms and catalysts for racism, the polytheoretic nature of ethnomethodology will afford me a framework to explore language, appearance, self-perceptions, and the stressors that African-American executive administrators juggle when becoming successful leaders in a community college. It exists as a codex to help translate some of the experiences of existing leaders during their community college growth.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a review of the literature that sought to explore the need and the mission of the community college as it was designed to provide academic support for insular communities and stood as supplemental educational institutions for the university systems. Yet as the demands of the surrounding communities evolved and began to include a drive toward different initiatives including political and social support, the literature explains how the mission of the community college began to change and address these initiatives. As



detailed in a number of contemporary missions, the need for a more pluralistic and globally diverse community college has not only changed the curricula offered, but also the demographics and characteristics of the students have changed to reflect the shift in diversity. As the missions and clients have changed to include an appeal to a more diverse population, community colleges on a whole do not employ administrative leaders who may reflect the population that they serve. In fact, impending retirements of aging executive administrators are providing opportunities to employ more diverse candidates, but due to the stresses and practices of discrimination, few African-Americans are selected or even desire to fill this void.

To contribute to the complexity of the issue of administrative diversity, those few African-Americans who have earned administrative positions are either steered in the less prestigious and marginally influential multicultural student affairs, developmental academic support, or in other capacities where their input is limited to a select population of students, a select concern of the institution, or devalued all together. Hegemonic practices that may continue to support the traditional values of an institution may stand as a primary reason for their isolation or aloofness.

Chapter 2 concludes with literature that suggests that the historically cultural compromises that these administrators may make in their public and private lives may contribute to the stresses of their positions, as well as affect societal perceptions of African-Americans as a whole. If the African-American administrators are indeed to be valued as contributing members of administrative teams, then the questions that the literature poses inquire about their low numbers, overwhelming placement in TRIO programs, and the duality of their consciousness. It introduced Nigrescence and Multidimensional Model of

Racial Identity (MMRI) as two means to understand the manner in which African-Americans shape their own identities, adopt a strategy for a means for survival, and wield a weapon in combating the hierarchy of oppression.

Finally the chapter concluded with an explanation of how Critical Race Theory (CRT) developed as a means to interpret the pragmatic discourse that may then allow it to blossom and address many facets of the human condition. It is not limited to the world of law, but instead it initiates very broad dialogues that allow it to cover ever-changing perception and ideologies of our American society.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultural adjustments that some African-American administrators may make in order to consider themselves valuable and contributing members of a changing community college system. This chapter describes the methodology and methods that were utilized in order to gain a more insightful understanding of each participant's experiences. This chapter begins with a brief rationale for the qualitative research approach, as well as the epistemological and theoretical perspectives. The methodology section outlines not only the research sites, and the participants, but also the methods used for data collection and analysis.

#### **Rationale for Qualitative Approach**

After careful consideration, I chose to answer my research questions through a qualitative study using an ethnomethodological approach. As supported by Crabtree and Miller (1992), qualitative study should represent a cultural retelling of a story so that the impact of such a story allows outsiders to gain a clearer perspective of other groups. Also because of the nature of qualitative research to use an "inductive, investigative strategy [to produce] a richly descriptive product" (Merriam, 2002), the decision to use a qualitative approach was a rather simple decision to make. Considering the nature of the study and recognizing that sharing cultural experiences was very crucial to understanding the devices involved with race relations, I concluded that the human element of storytelling from a cultural group was important in addressing the concerns of African-Americans on college campuses.

Just as many theorists argue, I believe that a phenomenological approach may be more suitable considering my intention to understand an individual's "life world" (Holliday 2002; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1997), as well as offer a more efferent connection through an intimate "identification of the meanings, patterns, and passions of a bonded cultural group" (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). In addition, because of the potentially sensitive nature of this study, I assert that a more naturalistic approach to uncovering and interpreting the phenomenon of race relations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) would be more effective and appropriate. This position is not to contradict the findings of other quantitative studies, but instead this study seeks to supplement those studies with individual stories from participants who live and experience those described social events (Esterberg, 2002). Yet as a simple phenomenological study may suffice, the reflexive nature of the "cultural retelling" suits itself more so to an ethnomethodological device.

### **Ethnomethodology**

To avoid stereotypes that often stem from and drive race discourse in our American society, and also to garner the subjective experiences of the individual administrators, I have chosen to pursue an ethnomethodological study. According to Creswell (2003), the "essence of the human experience concerning a phenomenon" (p. 15) can be described more effectively through the study of a person's interaction and interpretation of life and philosophical perspective of their own existence. Furthermore, by attempting to answer questions that are pressing in a more contemporary era, such as issues concerning racism and cultural hegemony, an ethnomethodological approach will offer institutionally muted

individuals an opportunity to actually voice their concerns and reflect on their own experiences.

Using such a method, participants can experience a psychological liberation through self-actualization as Moustakas (1994) describes a general phenomenology as “a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience”(p. 18). Yet through an ethnomethodological study, such a phenomenon has been extended to understand the different reflexive and indexical strategies that African-Americans adopt in forming their multiple identities as well as adapt to a potentially uninviting workplace. My interpretations of such experiences offer a more prominent and direct culmination of shared events and themes that describe traditionally taboo subjects such as racism and cultural hegemony in education.

Ethnomethodological (EM) studies do not exist as counters to phenomenologies. Instead, they exist as extensions of phenomenology in the sense that they attempt to understand how subjects deal with their immediate surroundings through both reflexive actions and indexical occurrences. Unlike phenomenologists who may or may not investigate certain units of analysis, ethnomethodologists attempt to understand coping and adaptive strategies through the interpretation of language and the formation of common sense (Garfinkel, 1967; Leiter, 1980; Handel, 1982); which I assert are two strong foundations of behavioral and cognitive characteristics in the African-American experience of oppression. As described by Holstein and Gubrium, “Ethnomethodological research is keenly attuned to naturally occurring talk and social interaction orienting to them as constitutive elements of settings studied”(2005, p. 487). This creates a quick-moving conduit to studying African-

American executive administrators in their work environment. Furthermore, EM has been formulated as existing to understand how “members of society go about the task of seeing, describing and explaining the world in which they live” (Heap, 1980, p. 89).

Ethnomethodology seeks to describe the methods whereby the word is created and sustained (Leiter, 1980, p. 39).

Reflexive strategies employed involve the self-evaluative accounts that the participants use to take action against their selves and respond to such actions. It is the dynamic in which the participant understands how they view the world and occurrences, whereby shaping their personality, language, and their own interpretation of how society operates. Ethnomethodologists insist that all accounts are reflexive regardless of how its content and reality is constructed, or even in the absence of peer influence.

All experiences are fortified as reflexive when the subject views such experiences as real or authentic (Handel, 1982). This accounts for the different realities experienced by persons of the same ethnic group (e.g., why some African-Americans view certain activities as racist while others do not). Every human encounter is reflexive in that it is the perception and understanding that matters, not the given definition.

The indexical strategies of interpretation concern themselves with the context in which certain experiences are encountered. The setting and context are the catalysts for memory, shaping of identities, and even the different arenas where linguistics are a concern. Depending on the indexicality, even the language skills of an individual may determine whether they are understood and accepted, or misinterpreted and denied. As one can readily understand, this acceptance or denial is based on commonly acceptable indexes or some

would term *common sense*. Yet the question remains of who or what determines or defines common sense?

Mannheim (1964) defines common sense as a culmination of three distinct forms of knowledge; identified as *documentary knowledge*, or the knowledge from artifacts that represent underlying patterns of understanding; *objective knowledge* which is assumed from a historical period or era, represented by a period's culmination of beliefs or ideologies; and *expressive knowledge* that represents the personal convictions shaped by an individual's personality or identity. Together they represent a cultural understanding of a society from a global perspective. Yet Mannheim goes on to explain that "one's place in the social structure – one's education, class status, income, religion...serve to influence one's grasp of the global perspective" (as cited in Handel, 1982). This simple interpretation opens the door to a hegemonic view of what we as Americans accept as common sense by potentially and systematically discrediting or discounting the perspective of any minority culture. This asks of everyone who embraces diversity: If education, class, and income can define what constitutes common sense, then why can not race or ethnicity? In the American community college, which definition of common sense are we asked to accept: the traditional documentary, objective and expressive knowledge of the past century, or the experiential and reflexive accounts of our students and members of traditionally muted ethnic groups? This study answers these questions.

### **Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective**

One of the essential components of qualitative educational research is the epistemology of the primary instrument. While Crotty (2005) describes the epistemology as a

theoretical perspective of knowledge and “how we know what we know,”(p. 8), others such as Maynard (1994) have explained that the importance of the epistemology to the research lies within its power to justify the position of the researcher, while determining what is both adequate and legitimate. The need to explain one’s own epistemological foundation as it relates to the research helps to establish a firmament on which to stand and present an argument (Pallas, 2001).

Considering that the very nature of Critical Race Theory (CRT) seeks to explore the interest convergence between Black Americans who are often challenged by racist or oppressive structures and White Americans who often benefit from their position of power (Delgado, 1995), it seems logical that the researcher assume a subjectivist perspective. The oppressed-oppressor nature of group politics fuels CRT and often presents the shared experiences of each faction through the phenomenological approach (Patton M. , 1990).

Subjectivism dictates that the social meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object, but is instead imposed on the object by the subject (Crotty, 2005) as illustrated by the common expectation of all administrators to conform to the socio-cultural infrastructure of the community college. The meaning that African-American administrators ascribe to their positions may stem from their historical self-alienation (Davis, 2000), oppressively imposed ostracization (Bell, 1987), or lack of realization (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). Whichever the case, a study such as this one initiates a meaningful contribution to the discourse of race relations that can stem from multiple realities instead of one single objective one.



### **Research Sites**

In order to maximize the variance of participant experiences and campus culture, I gathered ethnomethodological data from 6 urban community college districts in United States. Often the experiences of African-Americans are very different when one considers the diverse cultural and historic context of different regions. This will allowed me to gain an insightful perspective of several different campuses.

The first campus institution I visited is located in the Midwest of the continental United States. The institution's full time enrollment was 19,683 in Fall 2009, with a credit enrollment of 181,161. It is located in a metropolis and heralds a student population of diverse backgrounds. This institution was selected because of the growing minority population that is continues to serve. This institution was also selected because of its expressed desire to hire faculty and administrators who are dedicated to campus diversity and community appeal.

The second campus that I visited is also located in the Midwest, but this geographical region is also known as The American Plains. It is part of a multi-campus college that has six campuses and several community centers. In Fall 2010 it recorded an enrollment of over 25,000 students who enrolled in almost 218,000 credit hours. This college was selected because despite its large enrollment, it employs very few ethnic minorities. In fact the participant that I interviewed is the only ethnic minority who sits on the President's Cabinet.

The third college that I visited is located near the west coast. It is a smaller college district of three campuses and enrolls a student population of over 26,000. Its diversity is illustrated in the student population, but it is not reflected in the staff, faculty, or

administration. The participant is the first African-American to hold the position of Campus President in the college's history.

The fourth district is also a fairly large district of 5 college campuses with an enrollment of over 62,000 students. It is located in the northwest of the United States and employs two African-American campus presidents. The District Chancellor is also African-American and she has existed in that position for the past 6 six years.

The fifth district that I visited is considered one of the largest districts in the United States and serves a metropolitan county in the Southwest. It houses 7 campuses and boasts a 2009 enrollment of 71,928 students I chose this institution because of the population that it serves and the district-wide initiative to recruit more faculty members of color. This institution has also had a reputation to recruit and retain African-American executive administrators.

The sixth and last campus to be visited is located in the south and is a fairly large community college. This college heralds 9 total campuses which three additional learning centers. The total population of enrolled students in 2010 was over 26,000. This site was selected because of the size, national influence of transfer students and the successful adoption of the four-year baccalaureate

Collectively, the selection of colleges also stemmed from their involvement in and support of organizations that support the recruitment of African-Americans such as the National Council for Black American Affairs, The Lakin Institute for Mentored Leadership American Association of Community Colleges, and The League for Innovation in the Community College. By supporting these organizations, the selected colleges have openly

expressed a desire to promote culturally diverse leadership and the cultural competency of its leaders.

### **Participant Selection**

The African-American participants I invited all hold positions as executive administrators in their respective community colleges or must have once been employed in such a capacity. For the purposes of this study executive administrators are defined as those persons who hold leadership positions that include both active and retired college chancellors, presidents, vice presidents, and provosts.

Selecting participants from this broad pool of administrators allowed access to information on many different levels of leadership, including those who report to the CEO of a system and the CEO themselves. Each position offers a different perspective as all the participants are not only responsible for different constituents at various levels, but they all report to different supervisors and have various levels of autonomy.

In addition, by using a priori theory based on perceived ethnicity, I selected those who have self-identified as being African-American. Also keeping in accordance with Patton (1990) who suggests that qualitative research stem from a small pool, and even regardless of the sensitive nature of the topic of race, assimilation and self-perception, and the potential ramifications that could stem from exposing ones honest, diverse opinions and perspectives, finding willing participants that will share their experiences was not especially challenging. After I solicited responses from 15-20 participants, I secured 7 eager participants, which allows for “a thick [and] richly descriptive” (Merriam, 2002; Esterberg, 2002) qualitative product. Furthermore, the number of participants allowed for saturation that inherently

contributes to the goodness and trustworthiness of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Smith J., 1993).

I was very purposeful (Creswell, 2003; 2009) of which participants I invited to participate in this study. The positions that they hold, along with their perceived or expected influence on the institution, is very important in maintaining the goodness and trustworthiness of this study. In addition to the varied positions, I also invited my participants according to their length of tenure at their current institutions, which may parallel, complement, or differ from an administrator who has retired from their presidency for a number of years.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

There are four basic methods for collecting data in qualitative research. These methods include: (1) observations by the researcher of the participants and sites with accompanied by unstructured fieldnotes; (2) interviews of the participants in one or more sessions; (3) review of public or private documents that may offer a historical or chronological insight; and (4) audio and visual recordings that may assist the researcher with recalling information or maintaining a record of events that may have been overlooked (Creswell). For the purposes of this study, the primary methods of data collection included the use of observations and interviews.

### **Interviewing**

The potential of interviewing in qualitative research is boundless as it is a method for gathering data that reflects the interviewee's point of view rather than the inflexible

interviews of other approaches to research (Bryman & Teevan, 2002). If interviews are utilized effectively and thoroughly, the interviewer can establish a communicative relationship with the interviewee, while accessing the context of people's behavior and understand the meaning of such behavior (Patton, 1987). In addition, both the primary instrument and participant can use the interview as a conduit of conversational information that avoids most of the obstacles in misinterpretation that accompany many third-party techniques (Kvale, 1996).

Though Kvale (1996) would assert that "qualitative research interviewing is not formulaic" (p. 130), Patton (1990) describes three techniques or probes to use to garner the information that is needed. I incorporated Patton's detail-oriented, elaboration, and clarification probes in order to gain access to the phenomena experienced by all the participants.

The Detail-Oriented probes are natural conversations that we hold during which the interviewer asks specific follow-up questions to gather keener details from the interviewee. Patton describes them as the "who," "where," "what," and "how" questions.

The Elaboration probes are cues to the interviewee that the interviewer would like for them to keep speaking. These cues are not necessarily verbal, but can also include the behavioral cues that Patton also suggests.

The Clarification probes tell the interviewee that the interviewer needs more information or a "restatement of the answer" (p. 125). By using the three probes effectively, the interviewer can begin to shape meaning and reconstruct the lived experiences of the interviewees. Interviewing "allows us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action" (Seidman, 1998, p. 128).

Because of the varied types of interviews, I was intentional in selecting semi-structured as my interview style of choice. Merriam (2002) describes the semi-structured interview as a style that “reflects a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time” (p. 13). This allowed the participants to offer their perspectives without the constraints or steering of rigid questions. Semi-structured interviews also allow for interpretation on the participant’s part -- allowing a more engaging and rich description of the experiences.

As part of the semi-structured interviews, I also used a “funneling technique” to access information that some administrators may either consciously or subconsciously guard. The funneling technique is very intentional while it assists the interviewer in securing traditionally guarded information. By initiating the interviews with very broad and general questions which help the participants feel at ease and comfortable, the interviewer can then proceed with very pointed and direct questions that attempt to uncover some of their experiences that may be guarded, forgotten or ignored.

### **Trustworthiness**

Addressing trustworthiness and goodness is rather important in qualitative research in that it insures that the study was complete, objective, and sound. As a means to maintain a trustworthy and sound study, I employed several traditional strategies to formulate my conclusions.

One such strategy to maintain a trustworthy study is to maximize the variation (Merriam, 2002) of participant experiences was by purposefully selecting them from a diverse community. As mentioned previously, the pool of participants is large, and stems

from different geographic communities. Recognizing American historical references and conditions that have oppressed the African-American population, while understanding that oppression and marginalization still occurs, geographic location of each institution was taken into consideration when compiling data.

As a final step in maintaining trustworthiness and goodness, I employed several member-checking strategies as to insure that the stories are accurate (Crotty, 2005). Each participant was presented with transcripts of each interview session before the data is coded and analyzed. This allowed the participant opportunities to edit their expressions and meanings by changing or clarifying the transcript.

In addition to reviewing the transcripts, after coding and analysis has occurred, I presented each participant with the general themes that emerged from the study. This helped me avoid major discrepancies in the data while allowing them to read a preview of the study before I compiled and composed my implications. At the same time, the participants were then offered an opportunity to compare their reactions to the summation of general themes.

### **Researcher Role and Reflexivity**

My role of the researcher or as the primary tool in research is especially important and unique in that I have to garner not only trust and respect from the participants, but I also acknowledge and bracket my own biases and perceptions of how race is addressed in American society. By being a Black male who was reared in a racially segregated community, I have experienced and even participated in some of the more insidious acts and reactions to discrimination and segregation. Furthermore, by completing several years of education at a predominately White institution of higher education, my perception of racial

dynamic there has also contributed to my way of viewing the world. These are not biases that can or should be ignored. The insider status of belonging to a same racial group being studied will afford me a conduit to possibly engage the participant on a more intimate level of communication. This enhanced the output of information from my participants and allow for a rich data analysis.

As engaging as the encounters can be, I am aware that some of the participants were wary of sharing intimate details with me. Though their identities are withheld and I adhere to every standard of professionalism and confidentiality, the subject matter is quite volatile and discussing it does carry a risk of depression and isolation through uncovering the reasons for subconscious stress and recognition of oppression.

In addition, though my participants are executive administrators and few have on-site supervisors, none of them, except for the retired administrators, are completely autonomous in their positions. This may have caused them to remain guarded in their conversations and sharing their experiences with a stranger regardless of my ethnicity. In fact, the insider status of belonging to the same racial group quite possibly raised some eyebrows and suspicion in that I believe that at least one potential participant may have viewed me as a psycho-historical corporate “saboteur” (Grier & Cobbs, 1968). Nonetheless, I received rich data from my selected participants despite those who did not respond to the invitation.

To insure that these preconceptions of saboteur did not affect my selected pool of participant, I systematically established a professional rapport with those I had not met before, and reconnected with those I was very familiar with. In both cases, before formally requesting their assistance, I introduced my topic during various conversations, professional and private engagements, and through a network of mutual acquaintances so that I gained a



modicum of insider privilege. I am comfortable that all of my participants shared very keen details that they may not have shared without this rapport.

### **Summary**

The focus of this chapter outlined the methodology and methods that were used in this study. Because of the potentially sensitive and private nature of race relations and career strategies, special consideration will be taken to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

Because of the inquisition into the patterns of behaviors and speech, it is imperative that I followed a methodology that allows for specified units of analysis. Though phenomenology will afford me an opportunity to do so, the reflexive nature of self-realization and awareness of coping strategies along the lines of group activity lends itself more to following an ethnomethodological approach.

This chapter also provided a description of how the data was collected by mirroring noted qualitative researchers before me. By using the interview method for collecting data, I can effectively compile “thick, rich descriptions” that afforded me an “insider” status.

The six institutions that I visited were purposefully selected because of the geographic location, their expressed dedication to diversity, and the existence of a standing African-American leader on the president’s or chancellor’s cabinet. All of the participants were invited through a formal invitation to be interviewed and observed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **Findings**

The profiles of the participants of this study appear in this chapter. The chapter begins with a brief description of each institution that was visited, followed by a description of each of the six participants. The nature of qualitative inquiry demands that I attempt to describe the settings so that each descriptor that I use allows for a rich, thick, and cogent recreation of events and persons. The chapter also includes a description of the emerging themes that stemmed from the interviews, as well as sections of the interview transcripts themselves. Each interview includes a brief summary and overview of the encounter. Because of the sensitive nature of self-reflection, potential criticism, and other expressions that may impact others outside of the study and participants, I have made every attempt to maintain confidentiality including assigning pseudonyms to each participant and institution where they are or were employed. Yet despite the attempt at anonymity, each participant was informed that region of the nation where the college is located will be identified to explore some of the cultural influences on the participant themselves.

#### **Site One: Midwestern Community College: East Campus**

Midwestern Community College is a multi-campus institution that houses five campuses. Each campus is located in a county in a Midwestern metropolis that heralds a population of almost 700,000 citizens. The school itself has enrolled over 26,000 students with 3,500 students enrolled in the most rural campus.

The county itself boasts an ethnic makeup of 67% White, 24% Black or African-American, .5% American Indian, 1.6% Asian, .24% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander,

3.75% other race, and 3.3% multi-ethnic or multiracial. The school's ethnic makeup of the student body is quite similar to those of the county with almost 30% students of color.

Furthermore, according to the diversity summary of MCC employees, of the 984 budgeted positions, 150 are assigned to Black employees (15.24%) while 777 positions are held by Whites (78.96%). In addition, 4 out of the 62 administrators and officers college-wide are identified as being Black (6.45%), while 53 of the 62 were identified as White (85.48%).

While it is the most distant of all the campuses, the East Campus' student population is also majority White. At the time of the first interview, this is the campus that Participant One, Dr. Jeremy Scott, leads. Yet by the time of the second interview, participant one served a dual appointment as also the interim president at the most urban campus, with the largest population of students of color.

### **Participant One: East Campus President/ Central Campus Interim President**

As I traveled to the East Campus, I recognized that this campus is located in one of the most remote parts of the inner city as compared to other campuses. The multiple-lane roads were paved, yet as I drove further away from the city, I felt a sense of isolation from the other campuses. There were infrequent street signs that donned route numbers rather than names. And though after the interview I learned a more direct route back to the city using the interstate, because the global positioning system insisted that I take the local roads I encountered undulating hills, large pastures, and then finally middle class homes that were not elaborate, but instead reflected a middle to upper middle class community with manicured lawns.

The campus sat on a large plot of land and reflected the straight line, boxy architecture of the late 1980s. Each of the three building that I entered had large framed windows through which the campus' green lawns and stationary fixtures could be viewed. I arrived at President Scott's office early and sat in the hallway to observe the surroundings. I was greeted in a friendly manner by at least three employees and by one older gentleman. They were all White.

President Scott arrived a couple of minutes late for our interview, but it was not an uncomfortable wait, nor did he arrive without a sincere apology for his tardiness. He was dressed in a dark suit and tie, but I immediately noticed that the tie hung loosely around his neck with his top button unfastened. This relaxed appearance only complemented his warm greeting as he commented on my own business attire.

He is a tall, athletically built man who has caramel colored skin and appears fairly young to be a college president, possibly in his early 30s. His face as well as his head is clean-shaven which makes him appear even younger. He speaks quickly and energetically with a booming, deep voice that seems to command attention. Though it may be easy to see how some may be intimidated by his presence, he is always polite and waits patiently for the other person's response.

President Scott's brightly lit office is quite large at approximately 700 square feet. His desk is on the far end of the office with two chairs facing. There are several papers and files on the top that may seem to be chaotic to an outside observer. He also has a round table on the opposite end of the office with several chairs on the perimeter. The scant wall space is decorated with various awards, but noticeably there is a showcase with an autographed game basketball. The other adjacent walls are not walls at all, but instead there are large pane-glass

windows that herald a view of the main parking lot and the entrance to the campus. We sat at the roundtable as the interview ensued.

### **Positionality**

I first met Dr. Scott during my first observations of several members of the Presidents' Roundtable of NCBAE. It was during this weekend-long retreat that I first observed how charismatic he was, as well as and how well-liked he seemed be by his peers in the Roundtable. Not only was he one of the loudest and most animated during one of the open discussion sessions, but he also exhibited a sense of humor that put everyone at ease during a tense moment at dinner.

In addition to being drawn to his personality, I was also very interested in learning his career path as a young African-American male who seemed much like myself in regards to his academic prowess as an undergraduate, his relationship with his family, his perspective on student success, and finally his ability to make people around him feel important.

Lastly, I was especially intrigued by his perception of his college chancellor, as I knew her well and worked with her closely on a project that addressed a concern of diversity. By triangulating my own opinion of her effectiveness as a leader with his insight as person who reports directly to her, I would determine if my own independent opinions of her were accurate.

### **Career Path**

President Scott holds a doctorate from a Midwestern research I institution, but does not characterize his early academic prowess as one a good student. Instead, he realized

through his athletic experiences that hard work and recognition of “the currency of education” affords and provides opportunity.

I, like most, could have been a much better student than I was early in my career and when the light came on and I understood the currency that my academic performance that allowed me, then I lived up to my potential. Most people don’t see their academic performance as currency; that’s something totally separate. Because of his dedication to education, he insists that at a very young age he aspired to become college president and pursued that career vigorously:

When I was about 25 years old, I declared that I was going to be a college president And I felt that the community college would be the best place because the community college mission seems to best aligned with my personal mission. So at that point I started to visit with any college president that would visit with me regardless of the institutional type...

President Scott’s career by his own words was “guided by his own hands”. The positions that he has held from Chief Diversity Officer to Assistant Vice Chancellor at a four year institution, to becoming a community college president he attributes to expressing his desires for change and impact. Though he is not surprised of his success because his hard work, when he reflects on how meteoric his ascension was to college president, he does attribute a great deal to relationship building and networking:

This is relationship-centered business. Reputation and relationships absolutely gets you a seat at the table. Now once you are sitting at the table, you have to deliver. You can be good all day, but if nobody knows about you or can vouch for you, then I think you have some challenges.

President Scott is also a firm believer in building relationships with students. This coincides with the earlier stated belief that the influence of the students stems far beyond the classroom and the faculty. It is the idea of academic currency that supports him in the present and seems to drive his future endeavors. During the interview, Dr. Scott expressed that he does not see his career path ending as a community college president or chancellor; instead, his drive for student success, he believes, will lead him back to the four-year university or college to assist students there. Though he says that he loves his present job, he envisions assisting students persist where the focus is not on access as in the community college, but instead on academic prestige. He states:

One of the things that frustrated me the most both at University A and University B, is because they are selective institutions, there is an integrity issue that I struggle with. If you are a state institution and you are serving a community that may not have the strongest K-12 environment, can you reasonable be a selective institution? Because the folks that are paying the freight or part of the freight for you to even exist don't have a reasonable shot to gain access of the college. Not because of no fault of their own, the school districts are what they are, and so University A is an example where we were trying to be this world-class premier institution, trying to be amongst the "Michigans" and the "Wisconsins", but you know [K-12 academic performance is one of the lowest in the union] as far as support of education so the best and brightest students we can have these scholarships that were not from [that state]. I struggle with that. I think that community colleges give people who are in the proximity a chance to shine... So I am in this business because of students--- nothing else.

## **Vision and Initiatives in Diversity**

Dr. Scott's views on diversity are expressed through several intentional initiatives and expressed policies. He admits that he purposefully seeks talented individuals to staff at his campus and throughout the institution. Though he has met some challenges in the past, he still remains optimistic that hiring and promoting individuals who come from diverse backgrounds, whether the diversity stems from ethnicity, religious, or geographical location, are what contributes to the success of any institution. He states:

To me diversity is not a tangible asset. You can't check diversity off on the list ...diversity is a value; it is a spirit; it is an intent. When you think about diversity I think about my other values [such as] integrity honesty, effective communication. I think about transparency. Diversity is something that you have to truly believe that having people from different backgrounds and different experiences brought together with similar goals is a valuable asset. There is a richness that occurs when folks who have only seen of a certain kind of individual on television and to have a change to interact and engage it is a transformative kind of experience it is something that is ongoing process. Years ago we talked about lifelong learning, but diversity is a lifelong set of learning of lessons.

When asked about the benefits of diversity, he responds with the cognition of the latter stages of the MMRI:

'Cause it make us a better campus,. Now let it be clear its not just the color of a person's skin, or their ethnic background it also people who I believe who represent the highest quality of excellence who are very interesting in the success of students and who are also believes in the spirit of diversity...you have to look for diversity,



but I am also looking for folks who have some commonalities [and those who exhibit] some sense of respect and dignity. I tell them [even African-Americans] that if you want to come in here and act a fool then I may be the one to let you go. I have no tolerance for that.

And though his value of diversity is evident through his argument, he also admits that growing and nurturing a diverse college community is not without its challenges. He describes his experiences in recruiting Latinos as being less than successful. He says, “Now the Latino community don’t want nothing to do with Independence. I can’t get even get them to return my phone calls.” And he faults this predicament of the community at-large and they manner in which they have treated the newly immigrated Latinos within the past few years. In addition, he also admits that the Latinos he has attempted to recruit are already in positions that are compensated much better than those who have chosen to pursue careers in higher education. He states:

I was trying to pull this woman out of banking who was the VP of a bank and although Vice Presidents are not paid the best and that is an inflated title, we could not compete with what she was making.

So although he has made an attempt at diversifying his college, there have been social obstacles placed in his way.

Although obstacles stemming from the community reputation and the nature of education as a profession are often the reason why diversity is not achieved, there is also the culture of the institution that plays a role in hindering the progress of incorporating pluralism. Dr. Scott passionately recalls an incident early in his presidency when his integrity and transparency was questioned by those who he describes as being “entitled.” As he explains

his narrative, it is apparent that Dr. Scott is still rather moved by the experience and his kinetics and tone change dramatically. He leans in to me as he tells the story of when he attempted to hire an African-American adjunct staff assistant in the Office of Student Financial Aid:

I had an [African-American] young man who I met in the community who is one of the brightest young man you've ever wanted to meet. He worked in the world of banking with Wells Fargo and he was producing all of these mortgages even when people couldn't get credit. They loved him at Wells Fargo so much so that they wanted to keep him and make him a regional-type of person. Well he is newlywed and that meant that he would have to be on the road four day out of the week and so decided that that wasn't for him...I introduced him to my dean and to my financial aid folks and said that you think this guy can be an asset to us and where we want to go in financial aid in particular because he had a banking background and they said that they fell in love with him and they wanted three more like him. They hired him as a part time employee. Well the chancellor, vice chancellor of HR, and the board chair got this anonymous letter suggesting that Scorpio Horn is a relative of mine and that I am basically trying to create positions to basically put him in.

I was angry and I was hurt by that so much so that I confronted the entire community about it and I let them know that not only is that inappropriate but it is down right stupid and never would I put my professional my integrity or all that I worked to build in jeopardy for something so minuscule and not only that I have a family that I have to take care of and I would not risk that for anything in the world.

As he told this story, it was obvious that this had affected him in a way that he was not initially prepared for. In fact, this is where the interview changed suddenly to reflect a characteristic that I will explore later in Chapter 5: the ability/freedom to leave. Scott spoke with more passion than I had ever noticed. His demeanor changed from the polite, professional campus presidential posture, to one that supported a very close intimate conversation with a good friend. He began to speak in casual Black English Vernacular, his tonal intonations relaxed, and he looked me directly in my eyes while describing how he assessed the conflict. This was such a pivotal moment in his career that he was almost ready to walk away from the job entirely. He states:

I was leaving. I made up my mind that I don't want to be in a place like this. In fact, when I interviewed they knew about it and that is how I operate because I wear my emotions on my sleeve ... Cause here is deal, we all have choices. I mean I have served in a regional land grant institution to the land grant institutions, to district --- I mean I think I have done a good job everywhere I've have gone -- I have choices. It may sound arrogant or inappropriate, but I can't stay at a place that I can't change; that don't want to fully embrace the values that I believe in. It was obvious to me that this challenge to his integrity affected him more than on a professional level. This is when I recognized the stress that DuBois may have meant and I asked him directly about its impact on his person. He responded first by acknowledging the stress he experienced and then he explained how he initiated looking for another job rather than to continue to combat the conflict.

**Me:** So it really created some type of stressor on you.

**Scott:** It did. ‘Cause here’s the deal: We all have choices. I mean I have served at regional land grant institutions to land grant institution districts I mean I think I have done a good job everywhere I’ve gone. I have choices. It may sound arrogant or inappropriate, but I can’t stay at a place that I can’t change; a place that doesn’t want to fully embrace the values I believe in.

**Me:** And one of those values being diversity.

**Scott:** That’s right. So that was challenging. That was even just common sense. I mean that I was hurt because I have made a lot of effort to really get to know people...and you just sent a letter to the chancellor and to HR?

The challenge to Scott’s integrity and authenticity does not limit itself to White people. In fact he explains that outside of the stated experience with the part-time hiring, he has encountered intra-racial issues that seem to demand his attention as well. He explains that:

I have been in situation where I have hired African-Americans and they have turned out to be the most racist and caused problems in the organizations. N-word this and White folks are crazy, crackers, and peckerwoods. And you have to be careful with that. You have to look for diversity, but I am also looking for folks who have some commonalities. People deserve respect and dignity at all times.

### **Leadership and Authenticity**

This is the point in the first interview when Dr. Scott then begins to reflect on his personal life and his own characteristics and attributes that make him an effective leader and president. Throughout all of the interviews that we shared and even through witnessing several of his presentations, Dr. Scott admits that he is “not a college president; instead he is

Jeremy Scott Jr.” And this is where he begins to acknowledge his cultural and personal identity as well as pay homage to his own heritage as an African-American.

Can I hide it? It’s who I am. I am African-American. I am really not a college president. I am Joe Scott Jr. and that’s who is running this college right now. I am of African decent I am proud of my heritage, My heritage have helped me persevere when I didn’t know that I could and my family values are what I hold dearly and those things I am not compromising. I am up front about that in the interview process. I am not going to try and be someone that I am not. I am up front about that in the interview process. I am not going to try and be someone that I am not. So let’s be honest about what I can bring and if it’s a match then let’s do it and if it’s not a match, good luck.

And yet, unlike the historical assertion of Dr. DuBois, Dr. Scott finds solace in his identity as an African-American. He finds that not only is it a personal attribute, but he also labels it as a professional asset. Though he does not feel that he was an Affirmative Action hire, he does credit his insider status and views of diversity as being an African-American as a benefit and edge over his White counterparts.

If I wasn’t African-American I don’t think if I would have been a finalist. To be part of the district and being an African-American president even, has posed a little momentum in our community. I don’t know if stress can be tied directly to my gender, my ethnicity, my age because regardless of what those attributes are, there’s stress involved. What I can tell you is that who I am gives me leverage and creates barriers depending on the situation.

So if I am trying to convince an all White community that they may want to rethink something based on being more inclusive with color [as an] African-American that has some leverage.

If I am trying to convince a bunch of men that we need to be a little bit more open and careful and thoughtful about our behavior around gender issues, that's leverage.

This part of the conversation that speaks to his honesty and directness elicits a sense of confidence from Dr. Scott. At this point he speaks slowly and with great intention for clarity and directness. He speaks very candidly about his practice of being honest and how his sense of candor seems to be a much more dangerous attribute than even his ethnicity. He is not apologetic or remorseful, but instead very forthright as these are characteristics that he has identified throughout his career.

My biggest barrier though and I won't say barrier but my assets, my greatest curse is my honesty, [and] if I can't advocate for myself, how do you expect me to truly advocate for my faculty, staff and the students? It's an integrity issue for me; I am advocating for myself like I would advocate for others.

I always show these collages of pictures and I always tell my life story through pictures. So the first picture they see of me is when I was a baby, probably about 5-6 months old. I had my fists balled up. I have always been that way. If I think its right and my folks think its wrong and if I've got to take a spanking, give me my spanking, but let's move on.

In addition to his honesty, he also credits his success to the passion that he feels for the facet of the community college mission that supports the community itself. He readily identifies

one of the benefits of higher education as one that will improve society and provide a pathway of success for generations to follow. He states:

It is such a delicate balance. I am inspired to do the best that I can; to help more people be enlightened; to make a difference in the world in a positive sense, because an educated individual understands that they always have to be a person in pursuit of knowledge. My motivation is to help make sure that my children live in a world that is better and so what we do in our work contributes to that. My son is 10-15 years away from dating, my youngest is 15- 20 years away from dating and I'm deeply concerned about what the prospects will be for them. I am also concerned about the prospects of earning a living for them, and I feel like the work that we do helps people to get off to a good start...I am concerned about the world that we live in.

But this concern does not come easy and without expressed motivation from both his nuclear and extended family. It is the identity that he has formed from them that he admits has contributed to his success as a college president. The contributions and influences of his family members are what he describes as "the tools [that allow] him to sit in this chair and be effective." He admits that:

My mother sowed the seed of self-assurance and self-confidence that I should have the audacity to think that I can contribute to making the world better or having the best of what the world has to offer. Now my father instilled the work ethic; that I cannot be outworked. I am very grateful for them putting me in a situation, socially and self-esteem wise, to even think that I have the audacity that I can make a difference at this level.

### **Summary**

Scott gives the impression that he is a self-confident president who expends a great deal of energy on one of the basic missions of community college: student-centered success and engagement. During several conversations, he questions whether he is going to remain within the leadership ranks of the community college as a president, considering his desires to work more closely with students. Although he seems well grounded in college leadership, Scott's identification with his personal vision establishes a foundation of his authentic self. He not only clearly articulates his goals and aspirations, but he also executes his duties as a college leader in response to those goals. After meeting with him with over six times in professional and social arenas, his personality remains consistent as well as his expressions. The rhetoric behind the assertion that he is Jeremy Scott Jr. is a regular mantra in every conversation. In addition to presenting himself as an approachable, non-assuming individual, he also readily identifies his faults and areas in his professional career where he can stand some improvement.

### **Site Two: The Plains Community College: South Campus**

The Plains Community College is a multi-campus institution in the heartland of America. It has 6 campuses and boasts an enrollment of almost 25,000, which is the highest among all the state colleges and universities. The campus where participant #2 is housed is the most diverse of all of the college campuses in the state which contributes to the 1800 ethnic minority enrollment. It sits in the urban community that has a population of just over 200,000 residents. The median household income is approximately \$40,000. The ethnic makeup of the city where The Plains is located is not very ethnically diverse as over 80% of



the population is White, 8% of the population is Black or African-American, just over 6% is Hispanic, and the remaining small percentages are made up of American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islanders, and multi-racial persons.

### **Participant Two: Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development**

As I arrived at the South Campus, I instantly recognized the stark contrast of its building architecture and landscaping as compared to the other campuses of the institution. The three main buildings were boxy and positioned very close to each other. They were reminiscent of the plain windowless architecture of the professional buildings of the 1970s and 1980s. They were trimmed in brown and what windows they had, were slender and narrow and without any openings.

The building that houses the office of the vice president was not part of the main administration building; instead it was located in a building at the far end of student parking lot and resembled an renovated auxiliary structure that had previously housed facilities or building maintenance.

I arrived early and waited for Dr. Campbell, Vice President for Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development, to arrive back to the office from lunch. While sitting in the waiting area with other students, it was obvious that this was an office that embraced diversity and pluralism. There were pictures and posters on the wall that addressed the subject of diversity, as well as the magazines that were available for reading. The White receptionist spoke loudly with a nondescript Midwestern accent as she greeted all the students and visitors with a warm salutations and directions.

When Dr. Campbell arrived 10 minutes after I got there, she walked in like a whirlwind. Though we met on previous occasions, I was surprised to see that she was much smaller and shorter than I remembered. She was very attractive African-American woman who appeared as though she was approaching 60 years old and dressed fashionably well. Her hair was cut close to her scalp and styled in a very simple and low maintenance manner. She wore very contemporary metal framed glasses that complemented her business slacks and layered blouses. She led me to her office with confidence and intent.

As I entered her office, she directed me to sit immediately across from her on very comfortable easy chairs, with a low profile table positioned between us. Her office was about 400 square feet and decorated to reflect her sorority affiliation, African-American cultural identification, and her involvement with the college.

### **Positionality**

Before I began my initial invitations to participate in this research, I had only cursory knowledge of Dr. Campbell. She was extremely popular and well-known in her community, but my encounters with her were always brief and always in very public forums. The first time we met, she was giving an address on her duties as a member of an executive team with her college. And though she always spoke with confidence and honesty, I found her especially intriguing because I was familiar with the cultural mainstream and hegemonic conditions under which she lived; I lived for a number of years in the same community. By inviting her to participate in my study, I believed that she would offer a perspective from a very proud African-American woman who I assumed had to assimilate with the White Eurocentric culture that permeated her professional and private lives.

**Career Path**

Dr. Campbell began her career in higher education after several principalships in elementary education, and joined the ranks of the community college because she “liked the progressiveness...and impacting the quality of life from the perspective of the community college to do it.” She has been with The Plains Community College for the past 17 years and plans on retiring from the same institution. She was initially hired as the Executive Dean of the campus, a position which is now referred to as the Provost. As Dean, she was responsible for the supervision of campus including student services; academic affairs; hiring and supervision of faculty, both tenure track and adjunct; program development; and scheduling. After nurturing a growing need for community outreach, she was then appointed and commissioned to the position of Vice President of Community and Workforce Partnerships. As Vice President, she also holds the responsibility of serving on the president’s cabinet, and is presently the only ethnic minority who serves on the cabinet.

In the capacity Vice President, she proudly speaks about the several programs and initiatives that fall under her supervision. She describes her involvement in workforce and business partnerships, GED programming for ex-offenders of crime, and workforce training and academic programs for those who are incarcerated, and academic diploma programming for former high school dropouts. She describes these responsibilities as “transformational opportunities”. She states, “It is encouraging to see people leveraging and coming together and that is what our department is about.. leveraging those partnerships for increased opportunities for the whole spectrum [of students]. That is the beauty of it.”

## **Vision and Initiatives in Diversity**

As an African-American executive administrator, Dr. Campbell recognizes the value of diversity in the community college; yet despite her position and longevity in education, specifically at this institution, she still recognizes a need to fill a void of meaningful diversity in administration and the college culture. She states:

I would say that it is different than I when I came in the early 1970s; however, you always hear about the ceiling or there is that box where you have pockets of people who talk diversity, but it's representational in terms of festivals, or you know that traditional way with foods and festivals. You see people socializing, but systemically in terms of systems, it has not changed.

Me: It has *not* changed?

Campbell: Just the little bit, but I say incrementally... in small increments. And when I say systems, I am thinking that in terms of leadership. If it has changed significantly you would see a different face in terms of leadership that makes key decisions and you don't see that like here at the college -- you only see my face there. So that is not a change. It was my face in 1990 and here you are talking about 2010 still no difference; that is not a change.

She then goes further to describe her frustration of how the ethnicity of the leadership does not align itself with the demographics of the student population. She recalls a recent encounter at one of the school's many commencements:

At the prison graduation last week, I looked up on the stage and the representation from The Plains Community College, and everyone was White! Here we are with a predominately Black audience and... I'm looking at the department and there isn't

anyone Black in that department. So no, it hasn't changed. The demographics of the state has changed, but not the number of Latino or African-Americans in leadership.

In addition to her frustration with the lack of diversity, after inquiring of her contributions, her frustration seemed to mount. After decades of "sitting around the table", she admits that her "tolerance has shortened" when compared to earlier in her career.

When you are early in your career you are more strategic in terms of how you address things. You don't want to impact your movement and so you are cautious. I say this to say you're in a position where you need to speak up when you need to add and make a difference. However, I am through climbing now so I am going to say how I see it.

She then proceeds to recall an experience with a colleague who failed to recognize her and her credentials properly and respectfully. After publically acknowledging all of the other executive administrators, and an educational coordinator—"a no-nothing position", she is referred to as "Martha Campbell of something, something Outreach." As she retells the story to me, she becomes visibly upset. Her bottom lip begins to quiver and the intensity in her eyes increases while her brow furrows. She states:

I very seldom get angry because it [someone forgetting her formal position] happens, but you get the respect from the title; a title that identifies who you are. The respect is in terms of who you are individually. I don't have to called Dr. Campbell all the time, but when it is important such as during a formal event and acknowledgement, then I want it to be known. He knew better and I let him know that it was unacceptable.

Because it was still evident that neglectful experience still bothered her, I asked if it contributed to some stressors in her professional life. She responded with, "I don't think the

stress ever leaves, but you have to find outlets, way to relieve your stress.” She finds ways to deal with stress through her affiliation with the National Council of Black American Affairs, connecting with friends outside of education, and finally traveling to meet friends in other cities that contribute to a more cosmopolitan and urban environment. She stated, “I don’t think I would have lasted this long had I not been connected with NCBAA...If I did not have the resources to leave Midwest to connect with my friends I don’t think I could handle central Midwest.”

In a subsequent interview, Dr. Campbell relays to me that although she views the surrounding community as antithetical to the promotion of ethnic minorities, she counters that cultural divide by encouraging younger, more diverse individuals to enter the workforce at the college. In fact, she found that it was necessary to intentionally seek out individuals from the community who may “force a change.” She states:

Sometimes within an institution, if you change the infrastructure it can force change and so you work on that whole at the same time you work on opportunities that will bring in new thought. That is what I did on the campus, I brought in new adjuncts. I didn’t have a lot of full time positions, but I did bring in diversity through the adjuncts who understood the need for community-based initiatives.

### **Leadership and Authenticity**

While dealing with the ever presence of stressors of being a Black woman in a position of authority in a predominately White culture was sometimes “toxic”, Dr. Campbell began to deal with the stress though familial influence and support. Not unlike all of the participants, Dr. Campbell also had pictures of her nuclear family in her surroundings. One

picture of an older Black woman in particular seemed to be strategically placed over her desk who she later identifies as being her mother. Her mother is one of the more influential persons in her life when learning to deal with challenging conflicts and situations. Dr. Campbell speaks carefully about her mother initially, but yet in later interviews she is more candid and open. She explains her mother's influence this way:

In the position of leadership, especially when it comes to minority or African-American, you can be the only one and alone. My family has always been there in terms of showing unconditional support and encouragement and sometimes not knowing much about the industry, but just in general terms providing some insight and wisdom about situations and why they happen and how to address them. My mother has a phrase about *dealing with them with a long-handled spoon*. When you come into a situation and it becomes really toxic, then you have to position yourself in terms of how you deal with the person, you don't change in doing business, but you do protect yourself against an outcome that could be detrimental or harmful.

Keeping that distance with *a long-handled spoon*.

This "long-handled spoon" is a popular theme throughout the older generational interviews in this study. The idea of privacy and segregation from the professional work environment is extremely prevalent. This is not only a way that the older administrators deal with the stress of the work environment, it also seems to allow for a more meaningful, and welcomed relationship to nurture with people of the same subculture.

Dr. Campbell expounds on her perspective through her expansion of relationships beyond the college. It is because of these friendships and relationships with people outside of the realm of education that she not only continues the process of self-actualization, but also

learns how to identify and cope with the stress in different ways and from different perspectives. She admits that:

I don't think the level of stress leaves, but you have to find outlets and ways to relieve your stress. I found out early in my career that my outlet was having an outside life, a personal life. My network of friends spanned beyond my colleagues where I operate in education. I have a network of friends that are in various careers and it gave me a broader prospective of how to handle different decisions, how to deal with personnel and it helped me to look at different situations in a broader scope than basically through education.

Education was so limited, so I found that blending education and business practices really helped me a lot. The business practices centering around leadership in how you develop people, you work through people and you look at that organizational culture. You know that people make up an organization so its how people feel and how you supervise and work with people who help you with your stress.

So when you see my surroundings and you look around my office, I bring what I value and what makes me feel good into my office, my space and that helps me to stay centered and how I surround myself around people helps me to relieve stress.

The idea that the current leadership lacks the skill or drive to orchestrate the initiatives of diversity seem to be one of the stressors that appears in all of the conversations that I had with Dr. Campbell. She does admit that she trusts the college president and his desire to improve the programming, curriculum, hiring of faculty and professional staff, but her confidence in the execution of such initiatives by the rest of cabinet is unsteady. She cautions:



The president can't do that all the time. Someone else on that leadership team needs has to have internalized the various students' needs and think broader. I don't sense that, because I don't see it. It is demonstrated in a general term, but when it comes to issues that may impact certain populations of students I don't see anyone else stepping up and advocating.

... the president notices [the need for diversity] that and really highlights that significant increase in enrollment, especially African-American males. He [the president] is out there, but it doesn't trickle down to the rest of the administration. The question is if he retires, who would be out there for the students? Where would those students be? I don't have any confidence that there would be a deliberate intention and target...for support.

### **Summary**

Dr. Campbell seems to be a very balanced administrator who is seasoned and well established in her personal and professional niche. Though she has spent her entire career in higher education at one institution, her view of the community college is amazingly altruistic and stems from a wider perspective of an educator and citizen first, and an administrator second. Though her institution boasts the largest enrollment in the state and serves the more diverse student population, she still remains the only ethnic minority who serves on the president's cabinet.

### **Site Three: East Coast College**

Participant Three is one of the youngest community college presidents in the United States. She assumed her first campus presidency in 2008 on a small campus of a multi-campus institution. Yet after serving only two years in the position, she was then heavily courted to assume a college presidency in one of the more wealthier and prominent counties in the nation. During the time of data collection, she was in the process of moving and transitioning into her new position in another state and geographical region.

East Coast College is comprised of three different campuses, located throughout the county of East Coast. The county is a commuting distance from a large metropolis on the East Coast and reports to have a population of 970,000 residents with a median income of \$94,500 per year. The college boasts three campuses and training centers that serves a total enrollment of just over 26,000 students. East Coast College is rather diverse when compared to the population of the county itself. The county is comprised of 53% White, 16% Black, 15% Latino, 13% Asian, and 3% of two or more races or other. The college itself enrolls 65% non-Whites and 9% of multicultural heritage.

At the time of the first interview, Dr. Peterson greeted me on the campus of her first institution during the weekend so it was closed and void of students. We met outside of the administration building where her office was housed. I arrived a bit earlier and noticed that the campus was surrounded by a combination of beautiful fields and vineyards. Yet on the eastern horizon, the vineyards yield to a breathtaking view of what the locals would refer to as hills, but because I am from the relatively flat Midwest, I saw them as small mountains. I arrived in the early summer so greenery of the new spring rainy season was just being

replaced by the drier, browning of summer. Nevertheless, this transition did not subtract from the beauty of the land.

### **Participant Three: Vineyard Campus President**

Dr. Peterson arrived on time at the first interview, and with a warm smile and a hug. This genuinely welcoming greeting was punctuated by her casual apparel of jeans, sneakers, and a tee-shirt. This was a stark contrast from some of the initial encounters we have had in the formal setting of the professional retreats and meetings. Yet despite her comfortable dress, she still exuded an air of authority and command when she paused to inform security, who unbeknownst to me had me under surveillance the entire time I was waiting, that she was on the campus and about to enter her office.

Dr. Peterson is an attractive full-figured woman who speaks swiftly with the enunciation of a Shakespearean thespian. She is short in stature, but her confidence is ever-apparent as she guides me through the darkened building toward her soon-to-be former office. The office is understandably in disarray with packing material, boxes, and files scattered over the floor. We both sit at a small table on the opposite end of her office where I can clearly see behind her desk where she keeps a spare pair of tall-heeled shoes.

### **Positionality**

I have known Dr. Peterson for a number of years as a personal friend, peer, and mentor. We are quite familiar with each other as we are from the same hometown, we attended the same high school, and we were even neighbors for one year. Because of my personal knowledge of Dr. Peterson and my intimate relationship with some of her family

members, I was confident that she would be honest and very familiar with the purpose of my study, beyond the scope of the Invitation Letter or the Informed Consent Document. In fact, some of my preliminary data were gathered during casual conversations and subsequently followed up by formal interviews. Dr. Peterson is a trustworthy and well-admired confidant.

### **Career Path**

Dr. Peterson has an earned doctorate in Higher Education from a private Midwestern research institution. Though she has spent her entire career in education, she admits that she initially had no plans to enter the workforce as a faculty member, nor did she, when planning her career, desire to enter college at all. Instead, she credits the decision to attend college by influence of her father to attend college, to “saving her life” from a life from the military.

I will tell you that I really believe that higher education saved my life. I believe that I came to college, now mind you that I gave you a very reflectionist/idealist notion of about my father, but growing up in household had its challenges there was a lot of control and structure and when to college, got buck wild and enjoyed it. But the part that I will say with that is that education gave me way to channel, a venue to challenge, focus and move things through. I was a senior in high school and wanted to go to the Marines and I went and took the test... the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile, and I was ready to go. My stepmother took me to sign up and ‘cause I was 17, they needed parental signature. And she got scared. She told me to go to talk to my father first, I went to tell daddy and he said, ‘Nope. Go to college for a year. You’ll be 18 at that point and if you still want to go, then you can.’ So I always knew that I needed some structure in my life and I always wanted to be part of something bigger, and then I

wanted to be a missionary, so education became that for me. The way I lead...one of my friends says to me that I think that I am a pastor of a church. And I say in a way this is my calling...this is my calling this is my mission. It is also the way I approach my challenges is a little different than most people and that defines me.

And from that point she proudly describes her trek to the presidency while being guided and intentionally mentored by a varied array of individuals of different ethnicities. Dr. Peterson is a self-described teacher and educator and she does not hide the fact that her career began as a faculty member in English at a small community college. During her first years in the community college, she was identified by a supervisor as a future president, and from that point on, she was groomed and prepared quite intentionally to assent to the presidency through the creation of positions, academic preparation, support from executive administrators. After just a few years and at the tender age of 33, she was then hired as Assistant Vice President which she held in tandem with another Vice Presidency, while completing her doctorate degree.

Eventually after 2 years in the position of Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, she was then promoted to Vice President of Academic Affairs which she held for 3 years before relocating to the Vineyard Campus. When asked about her meteoric rise to a presidency and why she felt a need to press on from the Vineyard Campus, Dr. Peterson responds with:

As much as I have had things to happen to me, which I believe it is about being at the right place at the right time, I also think it is about preparation and then being able to know what you can do and what you can't do. Here, I have done everything that I

know I can really do here. If I really could be honest, it's time for me to start looking at some different options.

Yet after some reflection, Dr. Peterson does admit, while breaking into BEV and referencing her African-American survival tradition, that she did “get her hustle on.” She states:

I did it all and I hustled. I got my hustle on... I believe that when you come from a working class background, or working class and below background, you know sometimes to make ends meet. You have to do some miraculous things sometimes. You might think of your grandmother who might have had to figure out how to make a meal out of something such as having neckbones and beans. Beans will last you for a week if you eat them right. Put enough meat in it and make some cornbread everyday, you can have beans all week long. The reality is knowing how to make things work. Get your hustle on.

### **Vision and Initiatives in Diversity**

Dr. Peterson's views of diversity are multilayered and complex. In her our first interview, she characterizes diversity and pluralism as “her life” and as “who she is.” And in embracing it in this manner, she understands that she regularly gets into issues concerning policies that are not always comfortable topics of discussion. In fact, as she sits up and looks me directly into my eyes, she describes a conflict she had with a group of faculty who questioned her philosophy in hiring internal candidates. More specifically, the group asked that the institution adopt a policy that mandates the hiring or promotion of an internal candidate if the pool consists of three or more internals. She explains:

I said, “No, we aren’t going to do that.” [H]ere is my issue. I said those types of policies have been used to traditionally used to keep out certain types of people. Once you get into the system how do you begin to ensure that somebody else can? And what you have done in effect is create a barrier to prevent someone else to get in. I said, “Why won’t we just make you more competitive for the position?” Obviously if you’ve done adequate professional development, and spent time and investing in these candidates as an employees, they should outshine anyway, you don’t need to handicap someone else who wants to get in that role.

Sometimes when we have those higher level positions, and they want to hire from the outside. That tells me that as an organization, we haven’t done a good job or good service in preparing that candidate for that next level. And that is what has typically happened to people who looked like me and you; we have been kept out. When you look at disenfranchised populations these policies are how you can continue to perpetuate generations of disenfranchisement.

She recognizes the value of diversity in terms of ethnicity, but she also embraces the idea that diversity in terms of talent, skills, and potential is also extremely important. As she explains her perspective of diversity, she asks the question of, “What do we want our legacy in the community college to be” and she answers with very similar perspectives of her mentors.

The idea of difference is not something that is looked down upon. It’s not something that you should be scared of, but something you want to embrace. That I think was really significant that...talent meets opportunity, that equals success. While we really want to advance the cause of diversity, we [cannot] do it by any means possible;

without recognizing this person may not be prepared for it. In the end, it ends up harming their career and the potential for any other person to come in afterwards. It is with this embrace of awareness of talent that she regularly reviews pools of applicants for potential positions across the campus. She admits that this is to ensure that the pools are representative of talent as well as diversity. Yet to compound her views on the recruitment of diverse candidates, she also explains that her view of potential problems concerning racism, sexism, and classism often impact her strategies in her everyday duties as the face of the college. This cognition has helped to groom her into a leader who is quite strategic in everything that she does, including diversity initiatives.

She explains:

They [experiences with race] make me very strategic, because I have been in a place where I am “The Only”, I am representing quite often “The Only” and it forces me to be very thoughtful on how I see things intertwine.

Yet as integral of a part as she plays in the promotion of diversity on her campus or at her institution, she insists that the president or chief executive officer of the institution cannot be the leader on the path of diversity in the institution; instead, she insists that “it is much more organic if it comes from the bottom up. I think that the top has to be receptive to it.”

### **Leadership and Authenticity**

Dr. Peterson credits her familial upbringing and influence as the impetus for the “greatest skills” that she believes she has: her empathy and compassion. She identifies her ability to connect with varied populations of people, clients, and friends because for this self-proclaimed empathy and compassion. The combination of both of these personality traits are



what allow her to effectively maneuver between different societal arenas as well as continue her professional tradition to work collaboratively with people who may have differing views and perspectives. She admits that she is not a person who does not admit to making mistakes, nor does she cower away from an opportunity to learn from others. She instead credits her willingness to think, analyze, and articulate that analysis so that it reflects the collective vision and mission of the institution as a whole. She states:

I am very good at seeing the big picture. I always have been even as a child which is also part of my detriment. I don't have a lot of patience for details which is probably why quite frankly I need to be at a large organization because a smaller one like this, you have to be on top of every little thing and that is not something I enjoy doing. I like to delegate it. I like to put it all together, I like to help other people see how it is interconnected, but it is not my strong suit to say, 'let me sit here with you and go over the graduation script.' I should not have to do that. You should be able to walk in here and say here it is. It is done. I also think that or have heard people say that I am a good thinker. So you present an ideal to me and I am able to sit down and break it into parts and to really analyze it from a perspective that really makes a lot of sense.

Dr. Peterson is quite sure of herself when it comes to the talents and skills that she offers as a former faculty member and now president. The personal skills of survival and compassion that she identifies are paralleled with the professional skills that are identified by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Though she does not dismiss the cultural competencies that she contributes as an African-American woman with stellar academic credentials, she does however identify her talents to communicate, her awareness

of the latest research, and the timing of opportunities that has allowed her the ability to move into the positions that she has held.

When asked about her talents, Dr. Peterson first acknowledges her ability to communicate effectively, both written and orally. Her ability to write is a direct result from her intentional practice of remaining her own scribe. Unlike some of her contemporaries at other institutions, Dr. Peterson continues to compose most of her own speeches and correspondence which helps her tremendously. She explains:

[T]he further you move up within an organization the less you do your own writing.

More people do your writing for you, so you lose that skill set. I do most of my own writing because I want to stay connected that way.

In addition to her talent for writing, she also identifies her ability to speak effectively in any social situation to articulate her ideas and position. Unlike the stress of the double consciousness that DuBois introduced, Peterson embraces the ability to “code switch” and wear the multiple hats of friend, supervisor, daughter, and wife. She confesses that she accepts her talents to become “gentrified” in certain social and professional situations and adopt a subtle, but definite change in language. This “skill” she professes as an extension and a testament of the complexity of her authentic self.

As a contrast to the foundation of the DuBoisian concept of double-consciousness, Dr. Peterson has turned the idea of using multiple communication and coping strategies into useful tools in her “toolbox” of leadership skills and characteristics. She understands that one of her most successful tools is her ability to communicate with people from various different backgrounds and cultures without compromising who she is or altering what she means to articulate. In the following exchange, she explains how she views the ability of code-

switching as a talent rather than the symbolic albatross of Black Americans in addition to those who may criticize her for using it.

Me: You have also mentioned and spoke very candidly about your ability to code switch and actually seem to embrace that dynamic. You seem to be pretty proud of it.

Peterson: I use it to my advantage; I use it as a tool. It is in my toolbox.

Me: But do you understand that some people may not see that as an asset?

Peterson: Oh sure, yes. No doubt. Just as some people may see person who is bilingual and they'll be in a room and they will switch to Spanish and they will see it as problematic or insulting. But if it met the need of that person at that time, then it is met.

Me: What about someone then calling you a sell-out, a player hater, or someone who doesn't embrace BEV in every situation?

Peterson: I think that is ignorant. Code switching is not just about culture; it's code-switching everywhere. When your family gets together for Thanksgiving, that is a very different conversation than you may have when you are with your friends from work and you go over to their house for dinner. It is a very different type of language when you sit around talking with your friends from college. There is probably a different type of English that you use when you present at a college. Code-switching is just a type of ability to manipulate--- that you are able to move in and out of groups using language. And we all do it. We do it with clothing or other things. There are many things that mark us all the time. The problems occur when folks don't know how to switch. It is just like our students, it is one thing when they are sitting down and talking with our friends, posting things on Facebook, but when they email you a

paper, they shouldn't sending you something like they are e.e. cummings. They don't know how to switch between the codes. There is the academic/professional discourse and then there is the personal/private discourse. They are very different things. And for you to move within the academic or any professional sphere, it is how to be able to switch between the codes. I don't see that as a sell-out, I see that as a very savvy person. Any buffoon can talk one way and not be able to adjust their language....that's not smart. I look at my younger cousin. I have a cousin who I can hardly understand what she says when she sends me a message. I have to literally sit there and decode it. This is the same person who can't go out and get a job and who is the same person who is tatted up and down her neck, and can't put two sentences together and then wonders why nobody wants to give her a jobs as a customer service representative. Come on now.

Yet, it is the articulation itself that changes and shifts according to whom she is speaking and under what conditions of which she is speaking. This ability to weave in and out of linguistic standards has allowed Dr. Peterson to characterize one persona of her and name that persona "Sista Girl."

Sista Girl is a subcultural manifestation of Black urban survivalist persona of Dr. Peterson, which presents and responds to people in a very basic, direct, and sometimes confrontational pragmatist manner of Black folklore. Dr. Peterson does not shy from Sista Girl, she does not attempt to deny her existence, nor does she apologize for allowing Sista Girl from appearing in very haughty social situations when she is needed. In fact, Dr. Peterson admits in her first interview that Sista Girl is quite appealing and charismatic to most, including Whites.

I am very much me; I never apologize for being me and if you can't quite get me then alright. I use it to my advantage too. I go *Sista Girl* on them in a minute. They love that. She is so down to earth; she is so real. I say to them, 'Now ya'll know I am from the south side of Chicago.' Now they never will probably go to 79<sup>th</sup> street in Chicago, but they will know when somebody says 'I am from the Southside of Chicago, and I am about to go 7-9 on you if you don't get out of here talking.' They know what that means now. They understand that plain and simple.

In her new position as President of East Coast Community College, she explains how beneficial *Sista Girl* is there too:

It is kinda nice. I am able to code switch effectively and I can use my polysyllabic words and I can also speak high English when I have to. And more often than not there are ways when you have to slip to the vernacular and folks can understand what you are doing. On the other hand that [BEV] can work in advocacy when we have some very dicey issues and as I am making my rounds and engaging in conversations with the legislators. Every very once in a while just a little taste of *Sista Girl* comes out. And there are some different ways in which you can do it. There are gradations of *Sista Girl* and she is here, she is a part of who I am. I don't know how one separates who they are professionally and personally. I think that there are boundaries that you place up, but ultimately at the end of the day if you want to be authentic, I don't know how you separate one from the other.

In fact, as she admits that "there are gradations of *Sista Girl*," she also cautions that every executive leader has to be aware of the power of language that comes with the position of

president or chancellor. She is quite aware of how the misuse of language in the position of leader can do great harm to the credibility and the effectiveness of those in power

That is a leadership skill. There is a time and place for that and the further you move up the organization, your words become more weighted. So I know when I say something it is not Dianne speaking, it's the college president. So therefore that any good president learns very quickly, before you become the college president that you listen more than you speak. You balance your listening with your speaking in such a way that you know that when you say something that the weight and significance of it is going to be heard very differently.

As I reviewed Dr. Peterson's progress and accomplishments, I assumed that she certainly have encountered some racism and resistance during her career that may have caused her some stress. Yet as we addressed this subject in all three of the interviews, Dr. Peterson was quite adamant that she saw very little racism during her tenure as a stakeholder in the community college. This does not suggest that there was not racism at all, but in her words,

When I had racist things happen in my life, I always thought about how to overcome them; how to survive them. So they never became these earth-shattering things about you hear about... these highly negative and inflammatory and all the actions and incidents that might have happened. I always had a counter to that...For every David Duke there was a Tim Wise.

Though she has encountered some racism during her rise to the presidency, she explains that she has never allowed it to become a stressor in her life because of her “preparation”. Dr. Peterson perceives her reaction to racism as its life-giving breath. So instead, she combats racism with the practice of being prepared intellectually to deconstruct or ignore the foundation of racism, which she identifies as being class-based. Dr. Peterson states, “Intellectually I can disarm that; let alone verbally. I don’t actually see race in everything. Sometimes it ain’t about race; it’s about class.” Yet class-based discrimination and prejudice is not confined to Black-White relations. In fact, she admits that some of the biggest challenges she faces as a Black female president exist in the relationships she has with other Blacks from the previous Baby-Boomer generation.

In our interviews, Dr. Peterson asserts that there are often ideological differences between the Black Baby-Boomers and her self-identified Generation X ‘ers. In fact, as she confesses, there are some strong contrasts between how the Black Baby-Boomers define the idea of “blackness” and how Generation Xers define it. She confesses that some of her encounters with Blacks that give rise to minor conflicts are other people’s idea of what being “black” is. Her experiences with being one of a very small number of young Black female college presidents have exemplified a sense of competition where she is being scrutinized by Black peers for her own authenticity. She admits that:

There is this *Queen Bee* mentality. We have become very accustomed in a lot of places of being the only one, and therefore we don’t like to be surrounded by someone else. We also believe that there is one way to Black...and that is very generational; I see that most around Baby-Boomers. I don’t mind having another

Black woman sharing this environment with me. That is probably my biggest challenge: Are you Black enough or are you too Black?

And while Dr. Peterson does not admit to these types of conflict as creating stress in her position as president, she does express a very distinct air of dissatisfaction with the belief that some African-Americans have to define their “blackness” for other African-Americans.

### **Summary**

My encounters with Dr. Peterson were not only insightful, as she is one of the youngest community college presidents in the nation, but they were also very unique in that I witnessed her change institutions between the interviews. This has allowed me to bear witness to some of the unique challenges facing new African-American presidents as they attempt to navigate through a pre-established culture guided by an older generation. Dr. Peterson was not only very accessible to me, but during my observations of her in various meetings and retreats of the President’s Roundtable, she also seemed as though she was a consistent resource for even some of the more seasoned presidents and chancellors.

One of the things I found surprising is that even with all of her confidence and experience, during one of my observations of her interactions with some of her contemporaries, she still sought advice, asked questions of her peers, and admitted that she has her own areas of improvement. This practice of self-assessment is what she has considered a mark of a true leader. She admits, “I am a born leader, but that doesn’t mean that I don’t have a lot to learn.”



### **Site Four: Coastal Valley Community College**

Coastal Valley Community College District is the largest community college district in the state and is comprised of three campuses and two outreach centers; all of which enroll over 62,000 students. The average age of the enrolled student is 28 years old and they fall into very distinct ethnic demographics according to the campus location. On each of the three campuses, women outnumber men by as little as 2%, but also as much as 24%. The most ethnically diverse campus houses 27% African-Americans; 21% Asian/Pacific Islander; 29% Hispanic; 14% White; and 9% other. In a conversation with Dr. Brown, she identifies the least diverse campus as located in the middle of the county that enrolls a student population of 1% American Indian, 6% African-American, 16% Asian/Pacific Islander, 16% Hispanic, 42% White, and 19% other.

The district employs a total of 2,120 faculty, classified staff, and supervisors. The employee demographics boasts an ethnic breakdown as being 6% Asian, 10% African-American, 2.5% Filipino, 10% Hispanic, .3% Native American, .1% Pacific Islander, 57% Caucasian, 14% other, and .5% of unknown heritage or ethnic identification.

### **Participant Four: Coastal Valley Community College District Chancellor**

Dr. Harriet Brown is Chancellor of Coastal Valley Community College District, one of the largest districts near the west coast. She has been district Chancellor for 5 years where before she was one of the college presidents. She has earned her doctoral degree in English at a private college in the South. She has held the positions of faculty, academic chair, dean, campus president and now district Chancellor.

When I arrived at the District Office of Coastal Valley Community Colleges, I felt as though I stepped back in time a few years. The country where I was located not only appeared to be a blue collar city with the multiple industrial buildings, railroad intersections, but I also felt that it reminded me of an old prospector's mining town. There were several narrow streets and roads that led to the main arteries of traffic, but even the main boulevards were narrow and bordered by overgrown foliage and vegetation.

The District office is housed in a 7 story professional building on what appeared to be the town's main street. It was also adjacent to the county courthouse so traffic was rather congested with drivers looking for parking spaces and men and women dressed in business attire running back and forth from McDonalds with cups of coffee and sacks of fried food.

When I arrived at the District Office, I was met with a very pleasant security officer who cross-checked my identification with the expected visitor's list. After confirming my identity, he directed me to an elevator that led up to the Chancellor's office. The Chancellor's office was the largest office I had visited so far during my interviews. It had a large desk in the corner and a board table in the middle with several chairs that sat on the perimeter. When I arrived and waited for the Chancellor to finish with her previous visitor, I noted that her office offered very little privacy. Instead of four walls, Dr. Brown's office was fashioned more after a fishbowl with large windows that allowed anyone on the outside to peer in and observe the activities in the office.

Dr. Brown greeted me very warmly after only waiting for a couple of minutes and despite feeling a bit under the weather, she moved quickly through her office and directed me to sit across from her at the large conference table. She was dressed in a business casual suit that was certainly in season by the colors and the light weight fabric. She wore her hair short

and in its naturally kinky state. She is rather attractive and her caramel colored skin does not reflect her true age. She looks much younger than she is. She speaks with a booming voice that despite her illness and her short size, commands attention. Her eyes are big and her ears are attentive as I explain the purpose of my research and why I asked her to participate.

### **Positionality**

When I began my career as a English professor with a community college, I learned quickly that a large number of executive administrators not only began their careers as faculty (Duree, 2007; Stubbe, 2008), but there is speculation that a large number of them entered the community college with degrees and credentials in language arts or English. This sparked my interest in Dr. Brown's career and her motivations for becoming a chancellor of an extremely large community college district. After learning that she not only fostered a personal relationship with several of my close friends and mentors, my interest of her narrative piqued with the desire to extend that sense of mutualism to me. I readily acknowledge her hard work and dedication to her college district, but I am very interested in her impact on community college stakeholders on a more national level. Including her involvement in The Presidents' Roundtable, The Lakin Institute, and the League for Innovation in the Community College.

### **Career Path**

Dr. Brown is quite clear about her path to becoming the Chancellor. She not only credits the relationships and networking that she has fostered and nurtured over the years, but she also admits that she becomes bored and uninterested if her responsibilities are not

intellectually stimulating. She has been with the District for over 20 years and has served in the capacity of Campus Dean, Vice Chancellor for Education, Vice Chancellor, and now serves as District Chancellor. Though she has served in many administrative positions, Dr. Brown admits that she did not begin her career wanting to be an executive administrator or anything else specifically. She states:

My goal, I really never had goals I guess. I started out wanting to be a teacher because that's what everybody did. That's what I knew as a profession when I went to college. Then I got into administration because I thought administrators were so bad and I thought I could do better. I enjoyed the work and I love the people part of the work and working in behalf of students... So, I didn't have a goal of becoming a president and I certainly didn't want to be a Chancellor reporting to a governing board.

Yet despite her chance or unplanned appointments, and scholarly preparation with the earned doctorate, Dr. Brown also credits the networking that she has done over the years. She recalls a story when several key researchers at the University of Texas at Austin and leaders for the League of Innovation set up an impromptu interview for her for a position at a Coastal County Community College. She admits that "special provisions" were made for her because of her talents, credentials, and her networking.

In addition to her networking and her relationships that she has established, Dr. Brown also exudes confidence in herself, as well as dedication to the mission of the institution. She readily explains that her leadership style surprises people and they are often caught off-guard by her frankness. She states, "I always surprise people and I don't know why they get surprised. They know how I am; I confront you. I will just show up at your

door.” But she also cautions that confronting every conflict or defending every decision that he makes, will also demand more of her time as a leader and she is not shy to explain, “If I start defending every decision I make, I will be spend more of my time defending than leading. There is a point where you must have trust in your leader and if they don’t have it, it is just too bad.”

### **Vision and Initiatives in Diversity**

Dr. Brown is extremely expressive in her appreciation and promotion of diversity throughout her college. She openly appreciates the value of diversity at her institution, but she is also very critical of some of the traditions and expressions of diversity of groups of her minority students and staff. As she responded to my question of how she supports diversity and pluralism, she immediately explains how one of her expressed goals is to close the achievement gap, “code language for people of color.” She is meeting this goal through regular retreats with her campus managers to create strategies to improve success among ethnic minorities; continued review of policies that directly affect success rates, retention, and persistence; and behavior among the student population.

She explains, “that students come to us [the community college] in various ‘places of despair’. We have to be conscious of that at all time and not be offensive while also acknowledging their “cultural position.” She offers this example of how her faculty is beginning to react to the population of Black males who are last in the number of completion. She states:

Ever since the meeting when I showed them the data, this one man that every time a Black male has dropped his class, he has sent me a note to explain to why. Now I

don't know whose dropping what, but he's thinking about it...his consciousness got raised. That is our role.

In addition, she also very critical of some of the traditional practices of the institution involving those that affect the hiring. She states:

Sometimes we create our own barriers to diversity. Once I had a person at a campus ask the question of why our hiring pools aren't diverse. I told her, 'You have a reputation of not liking Blacks or Mexicans.' It surprised them that I said that because no one had said that before. People don't like to talk about race, but I do. You can have an institution full of White people, where people would love to go, but that is not the case at [the primarily Black campus]. They [potential hires] would rather leave there and go to [the primarily White campus] because they think that it is a more welcoming environment.

She is even critical of a minority faculty member who has expressed a separatist view of academic instruction. She becomes very animated when she begins to describe one faculty member who has expressed his belief that only African-Americans can effectively teach African-American focused subjects such as Black Studies. She goes on to describe him as "short-sighted and narrow" as well as racist. She states, "That's racism, and I don't believe in racism even if it comes from us."

Dr. Brown's criticism does not confine itself to the employees of the district. She also is very critical of the students who she views does not embrace the pluralism of the college graduation. She recalls her disappointment and surprise of learning of the exclusive "Black" commencement ceremonies of the Urban campus when she first arrived. She explains that even though she grew up in the segregated South, she could not understand how Blacks who

enrolled in integrated schools would find a need for a separatist practice of a “Black” graduation in the late 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century. She explains:

This is quite unfortunate to me and it shows how far we have to go. I was so amazed when I came here at the backwardness of the black people. ..I thought that because these black people had not lived in segregation, that they had been in the state, an area that was more enlightened, that they would be different.

I was naïve in that way I suppose, so my expectations were just a lot different from then what I saw when I got here. So they expected me to be more pro-black than I am. I am pro-black, but I have never been a fist-waving Black, because I think people should get along and I think we should see each other as human being and not as adversaries. I am very aware of racism, I know that it exists and I can call it I know it when I see it and I will call you on it. I am not going to sit back and let it go unnoticed and that is some of the stuff that was happening here.

As she finishes her admonishment of separatist ideologies, Dr. Brown cautions that she should not be viewed as a woman who transcends race. In fact while she views pluralism as a key objective for any institutional mission, she also stands as an advocate for educational initiatives, and organizations that support minority success and recognition. Dr. Brown admits that she may be a walking contradiction in some respects by making the following statement:

I am not really beyond race; I’m probably more open more accepting of other people. It is not about race; it’s about people...the human race. That’s where we need to get. I know that we have the Presidents’ Roundtable, so I seem like a walking contradiction, but there is still a need for it because we are not where we are supposed

to be. At the same time by belonging to the Presidents' Roundtable, I don't want to perpetuate racism. It is a very tough balance. I think what is frustrating is that there's a need to do that...in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Leadership and Authenticity**

Given the passion for student and institutional success that Dr. Brown exudes, an interesting theme that appeared in my interviews was her disconnection from the surrounding community on a personal level. Her longevity alone is a testament of her board of trustees' confidence, but despite her 20-year tenure, she still does not consider the community her home. Instead, she explains that her home is "just a place to sleep" and purposely remained somewhat aloof or removed from connecting with the community. The fact that she works so intensely with the college stands as her reason for not becoming too involved as a citizen of the community. She states,

The job is so consuming that I did not to want to become involved in any other kinds of activity... I think when you move somewhere at 40 years old, it is just kind of difficult. [As an example] I am not a member of a church and that's not because I don't believe in joining a church. I attend, but I have not joined one and I did not become active in my sorority because anything I get into, I get into it wholeheartedly. I knew I would probably over-extend myself and the job is so consuming that I just don't do anything else.

Despite her separation from the community as an average citizen, she has made connections with a small cohort of people that she works with on a casual basis, and she does view her life as fulfilling and satisfying. She finds solace in traveling to visit friends and



family, and also spending time by herself. Yet this travel does not replace the criticism and the surprise that she experienced when she first arrived at Coastal Valley College, the campus with the largest population of Blacks.

Dr. Brown is a former English professor and she confesses that she cringes when recalls her initial experiences with some members of the Black subculture in Coastal Valley County. She is not reserved when she criticizes the use of Black English Vernacular among the “educated people” in the district, and therefore identifies this as one of the differences that prevents her from acculturating with members of this particular part of the country. Yet as critical of the public display of the BEV as Dr. Brown is, she is just as honest to admit had she not developed the skill for “code switching”, she “would have been accused of talking proper”; which in the Black American subculture is often an insult.

We have people in this district, educated people with doctorates and masters, who would say ‘I seen’, and that drives me crazy! I was educated in an all Black environment where if I had walked into any academic environment and said “I seen,” somebody was going to slap me. At home I never used [standard English], and I never used it with my friends because I would get accused of talking proper. But when I got in a certain environment and when I needed to, I knew what to say. They [the people of the college district] never learned that difference so there some real differences between [all Black people].

### **Summary**

Dr. Brown is a delightfully pleasant person, who people often characterize as a workhorse. Her popularity among state and national committees is driven by how involved

she is with community college education and leadership development. Though her energy and enthusiasm surpasses many younger leaders and she appears to be very young, she admits that she is retiring age and will be leaving higher education very soon to continue on a more philanthropic mission to possibly South Africa or other underserved populations in the world.

Her family and cultural upbringing in the Black south has shaped who she is today in keeping with the traditions of valuing formal education, hard work, and spirituality. All of which are very prevalent in her public and private interactions with me. In several of my encounters and through my observations of her, she is a very confident and outspoken college chancellor who is focused, assertive, and charismatic at time. Her confidence in who she is, is punctuated by her last statement:

In Dallas people would stand out on the street corner and sell Tyler Roses. To this day, I would stand out on that street corner and sell Tyler roses first, and remain true who I am before being somebody I'm not.

### **SITE FIVE: Southwestern Community College District**

SCCD is located in the southern region of the United States and serves a county of approximately 2.4 million citizens. The district heralds seven independently accredited colleges, with an enrollment of 72,000 students and an operating budget of \$500 million dollars. The district employs over 7,000 employees who contribute over 200 million dollars to the local economy.

SCCD's student population is rather diverse in that they serve 24.3 percent Hispanic, 23.9 percent African-American, 8.4 percent Asian, 39.9 percent White and 3.4 percent all others combined. The workforce is similarly reflective to the student population with 22.1 percent African-American, 13.6 percent Hispanic, 4.2 percent Asian, 58.8 percent White and 1.3 percent all others combined.

The District is unique in that at the time of the first interview with the participant, all three of the top executive administrators, including the chancellor and two vice chancellors were African-American. The first interview was conducted at the District Office which is located near the downtown area of a major metropolis. It is large brick building that encompasses a single square city block. The Executive Vice Chancellor for Educational Affairs is housed in the district office as well as the other members of the executive administration team.

### **Participant Five: Executive Vice Chancellor for Educational Affairs**

Dr. Johnson's office, as well as the other offices in the District Office, is ultra-modern. His office is surrounded by exposed brick and floor-to-ceiling frosted windows that reflect minimalist urban architecture and décor. The furniture is sleek and contemporary

with straight lines and none-descript framing. Though Dr. Johnson's office is tastefully decorated, outside of very few personal items, it leans toward a more impersonal and sterile environment. During the first interview, we sat very close to each other across a small table at the near the entry of his office while he speaks very candidly about his experiences in higher education as well as in business and industry.

Dr. Johnson is a medium complexioned Black man with a medium-trim build. His scant hair is neatly cut close to his scalp and he regularly wears a short beard and closely trimmed mustache. Though his facial hair is streaked with some grey, the rest of his demeanor or his apparel does not reflect his age. He is dressed comfortably in slacks and light knit shirt, all punctuated by a stylish sport coat that ties all the colors together. Although he greets me warmly, and removes the sport coat, his language and his diction is remains quite formal as he begins to describe his position as Executive Vice Chancellor for Educational Affairs

### **Positionality**

I first met Dr. Johnson during the fall retreat for members of the Presidents' Roundtable. His institution was the hosting the event and so therefore he contributed very little other than the hospitality of meals and snacks, meeting rooms, and transportation. And although he struck me as an aloof person initially, during a subsequent general assembly meeting at an AACC annual convention, he appeared more engaged with the topics, more contributory with the discussions. In fact, it was during this same meeting that I saw a very assertive, almost admonishing, caution to some of the other members on the subject of paying dues to the Roundtable. After speaking with some of the other participants and

learning that Dr. Johnson was not only well-respected in his position as Executive Vice-Chancellor, but also that many felt that he actually should have been Chancellor, I decided to invite him to participate in this study.

Admittedly Dr. Johnson was probably the most difficult to contact after the first interview, but nonetheless he remained cooperative, engaged, and offered a unique perspective on executive leadership considering his experience in the private sector of business and industry.

### **Career Path**

Dr. Johnson is unlike the other participants as he did not restrict his career to education; instead, he rose through the ranks from an associate in the human relations office of a large university, to the becoming a present-day College Chancellor. Included in his employment experience is his tenure as a business consultant for a smaller, independent company. He is originally from the east coast, yet he is quick to point out that he has lived in every geographic area of the nation except for the west coast and this gives his breadth on the topic of diversity and equity. He does not describe his ascension in much depth, but as the executive administrator of the largest division in the entire district, he does not shy away from achievements over his years.

After being initially hired as Vice Chancellor, and serving two years in that capacity, he was then promoted to Executive Vice Chancellor, Dr. Johnson is responsible for all the academic processes and functions of all of the colleges. These responsibilities include all facets of curriculum management including scheduling, assessment, distance learning, articulation and transfer, and workforce development.

### **Vision and Initiatives in Diversity**

Dr. Johnson's leadership style and frankness gives way to a very honest conversation on diversity and the roles that minorities play in higher education. Though he welcomes diversity, he also quickly asserts his position that higher education places too much emphasis on categories and labels rather than job performance. He states:

And then I also worked with a consulting firm and we did a lot of management consulting for small businesses and I would be all of the country I mean Phoenix, Detroit, all over. But it was kind of interesting to me because in that setting a lot of people were more concerned about the business practices than they were about diversity. And we had dollars from the department of labor through grants and some there grants that we primarily worked to support these small mom and pop businesses. 5 or six employees with a full range of interests. But I got to see a whole different perspective of the business die in regards of diversity, there will always will be bias. But the thing that I didn't see in the business world that I do in a lot of other place particularly in education is the concentration on difference.

In education we spend a lot of time making distinctions about people. Lecturer, professor, assistant professor, Black, White, Hispanic, traditional, non traditional -- in the business they don't do that.

Yet Dr. Johnson is also quick to proclaim that he is neither color-blind, nor is he deaf to the call for cultural diversity. As a testament to his commitment to cultural diversity, Dr. Johnson explains that as a college president at previous institution, he mandated that the pool

of applicants reflect a diverse population before the interviews could ensue, but he also cautions that

[W]e needed to make sure we have the Q-word: qualified minorities in all of these different pools. If we couldn't get them, then we couldn't run the search. I had to reject dozens of searches because they said they couldn't find folks. Then I would direct them to HBCUs, specific departments at universities where I knew people of color, and over about 4-5 years, we really started to see a different campus; a campus that truly reflected the students. And I was intentional going in saying that we should move in this direction [of a more diverse faculty], I am sure that during that process there were a lot of people who were disappointed and assumed that I was forcing them to bring in unqualified or less qualified people. But my point was that [no one] comes in knowing everything about the institution, but everybody they wanted to bring in, they wanted them to be like they were. In fact, I used to say that 'you want them to look like you' and I literally meant *look like you*.

It is his perception of minority exclusion and majority privilege that Dr. Johnson is ready to combat. During our first interview, as we spoke more about the expressed need for diversity, Dr. Johnson began to shift his rhetoric from the color-blind business model and performance-based promotion to acknowledging a lack of diversity within higher education. He characterizes this practice as entitlement and privilege.

I am no way suggesting that race and gender do not play a role, because they do. In those close situations concerning a promotion or settling a rift that involves a person of color and a person who is not of color, I think that the person of color almost always comes out on the losing end. I also think that persons of color, women,

persons with disabilities, and gays don't get opportunities because of the label or because the wrapper. What I am most concerned about is this nature of privilege because I think that's where there is a major difference between people of color and other folks. Because people of color tend not to have a privileged mentality. There are other people who think that because of racial, cultural, or whatever difference, they should have what they have and they should be able to maintain it. I don't think people of color have that predisposition. I think we [African-Americans] are predisposed to think the opposite where we have to work harder, smarter, better, and everything else. Now whether we do it or not is something else.

I believe that this practice of alternating between the argument for diversity and pluralism within an institution of higher education and the need to maintain a high degree of productivity and scholarship represents Dr. Johnson' and other participants' need to present a balance and justification between the two ideas. And yet once again he acknowledges a change and shift that American higher education needs to take in order to compete in a more technologically advanced, yet smaller global society.

We've created and provided more information in the last 60 years than we've done in the 200,000 years of mankind. And really if you drilled that down it has real been like the last 25 years. Go to the Internet and type in a question. You are not going to get one or two pages of responses; you are going to get thousands and thousands of pages of responses. I am not talking about the accuracy or quality; I'm just talking about the number of responses. This notion of privileged, expert, content knowledge from the faculty and staff perspective is almost ludicrous. Yeah, you know how to manage people using a 20<sup>th</sup> century management perspective, but do you know how to



manage from this perspective? Do you understand someone from an Asian culture or Middle Eastern culture who has a different perspective on eye-to-eye contact, on range of voice? If you don't understand those things, then you are going to have a problem in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. You are going to have to deal with all of those people and issues.

Diversity is certainly an idea that Dr. Johnson attempts to promote, but it is the constant reminder that ethnic diversity can offer a great degree of institutional capital without compromising the integrity of the institution that remains in the forefront of many of the participants. Dr. Johnson's institution is a reflection of such dynamic in that most of the Chancellor's cabinet is African-American. Dr. Johnson admits that he is sometimes in awe of the shift in ethnicity at the executive level. He states:

I was in the meeting with a private proprietary school yesterday, and the three people that represented the district were in the meeting were me, my associate vice chancellor, and my director of occupational training--- three African-American males and of course three White people from this private school. And I am sitting there thinking to myself: What are they thinking? That the top four levels of the District Office, including the Chancellor, are African-Americans male. And sometimes I try to juxtapose the situation, because we always find ourselves in situations that we are the only ones. Here in 2011 and I am still finding that too often that I am the only person of color in the room. And so flip that when you come in here, and you are seeing quite the opposite. So I am always wondering *what are folks sitting over there thinking?* Are they saying, '*Oh shit!*'?

## **Leadership and Authenticity**

While observing Dr. Johnson during his encounters with the Presidents' Roundtable, I assumed that he was rather reserved and quiet, yet after the interviews I learned that he speaks very confidently and assuredly. In fact he is quite loquacious and expressive despite that initial quiet demeanor. As he describes his role as Executive Vice Chancellor, I quickly recognized that he is a very direct and focused leader while remaining a staunch advocate for student success. Because of Dr. Johnson's experiences in business, he approaches his career and responsibilities from business model of defined success rather than some of the more traditional educational models that universities and colleges have been accustomed to over the years. He admits that he has little patience for academicians who refuse to explore a more practical or "total quality management" business approach to learning, academic rigor, and even tenure.

[W]e are starting to move, or being forced in some cases because of performance findings, towards starting to look at different measures in regards to performance or meeting objectives. When I have you in on an annual salary and unless you really mess up, you will come back next year. That is a very different kind of performance expectation [when compared to business and industry]. I would argue if higher education had the same kind of performance expectation as business does, that 60-70% of people in higher education wouldn't be in higher education.

To punctuate his embrace of the innovative, he is very honest and frank about his embrace and knowledge of the latest technological and avant garde learning styles that are taking place in our society as a whole. I asked him directly about the foundation of his belief that

education needs to change and he responded with a very telling example that reflects his need for more progressive institutions and leaders. He states: In addition, he is quite critical of some of the practices of traditional higher education including the resistance to change the curriculum, the complicated bureaucracies, and finally the need to label or categorize people.

Now the question remains what does the 21st century faculty member, or dean look like? Is that the same model that we had in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries? And my argument will be no, because a different set of skills are needed. And so what we have for the most part is a group of faculty in particular, administrators as well, who have 20<sup>th</sup> century skill sets and toolkits to try to address issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century...we have faculty members who are resisting social media. Well, they might as well forget it because that is going to part of instruction. Whether it is Linkdin or whatever, social media is going to be part of the fabric of higher education, or education period. And for anyone to resist that because they don't like this or that is asinine.

Dr. Johnson's frankness and honest continues when he explains the need for everyone at the college to have a shared vision of student success in the modern era. He insists that there are many new stakeholders in the institutions, particularly from business and industry who "have expressed some frustration over the traditional practices of higher education." He states:

The reality is there are politics involved there are other things that do hinder you. If there is a [lack of ] shared vision ...I think that particularly some of our newer faculty members who have come from industry, and so they have been out there and they know how it operates and [asks] why it takes so long for everything, having the committees on the committees, and how we just over-analyze the whole nine yards...

when you have a clear pattern that things are not working, then it is doesn't take a genius to figure that is something that we need to stop doing.

You have to ask the question of is it something that lends to the benefit of student success, because our mantra is student success. If it is not core or central element of student success, then why are we doing it? We have a thousand reasons why we can't do things, but very few of why we can. The reality is some of the things we can't do, we don't do.

Though it he has been unquestionably honest throughout all of my inquiries, it is when he is presented with the question of who he is and how he identifies himself when he becomes almost playfully honest. It is during this point in one of the interviews that Dr. Johnson becomes his most open and willingness to share. There is no arrogance in any of his conversations with me and certainly nothing as led me to question whether he was being honest, but this is instead the point in the first interview that I recognize his demeanor change from the stoic leader who has his finger on the pulse of higher education, to the African-American man whose wisdom, experiential knowledge, and dedication to his family has played a major role in his selection for a career, and how he maintains a balance between the responsibilities he has a father, husband, and an Executive Vice Chancellor.

When asked about the stress that he has encountered over the years as an African-American executive leader in the community college, Dr. Johnson expressed that he has very little stress because he follows the mantra of placing his well-being above some of the political conflicts that take place in the institution. He starts by explaining the conditions that led to him arriving at SCCD. He recalls that while in his capacity as campus president with

his previous multi-campus institution, the new chancellor and board of trustees levied major restructuring when he perceived that the changes may not have aligned with his vision of the institution. In his words:

And rather than wait and be told what was going to happen to my future, I decided that I would exercise my options and just leave before that happened. I think one of the most important things in any situation is to be able to leave. You don't let someone else determine what your next move will be.

In fact, as Dr. Johnson reflects on how successful he has been, he looks me square in my eyes and offers this advice:

You have to be secure to the extent that you are saying to yourself primarily, 'This ain't the only game in town.' Yeah it pays well, it's close to home, but Hell, I've lived in 4 or 5 different states and I can live in another. And I believe that I have something to offer. So I believe that that confidence comes from performance, experience, and faith.

It is with this faith in his self and his spiritual grounding that Dr. Johnson defines his existence as a successful community college leader. He jokes that it is his age that gives him the confidence to avoid the stress that DuBois speaks of, but he eventually comes around to sharing his faith with me:

**Me:** Where does this confidence come from?

**Johnson:** I'm old. (Laughter)

I'm going to tell you something that some people won't share often. It comes from God. It real. This stuff here, aww I'll hand it over real quick. Almost anything that comes toward me, I have a verse for it.

And yet as he does not admit to harboring any stress concerning his race or ethnicity, Dr. Johnson does admit that upon his initial hiring at SCCD he did encounter some racism and animosity from the previous Vice Chancellor, his staff, and a few other people. He has admittedly dismissed most of it as “loyalty to his predecessor”, but he also understands that race may be a part of life in American society and higher education is not immune to its existence. He states:

So if someone doesn't like me, I don't spend a lot of time on it because I don't really care unless it's a family member. My sense is that you don't have to like me to work with me, and I don't have to like you to work with you. My concern is that you bring something to the table and let's get the work done. If you are not bringing anything to table I don't care what you are.

Yet he does care what image he portrays of himself. When Dr. Johnson was asked about his own identity and whether he is his authentic self while still remaining one of the top executives in the District, Dr. Johnson responds with a statement that has been reiterated through all of the interviews:

That is the only way I know how to be. You get what you see. I'm not going to be overly politically-correct, and if you ask me something, I'm going to tell you the truth. And if I can't tell you something, then I will tell you that too.

## **Summary**

Dr. Johnson is a brutally honest and forthcoming man. Throughout all of the interviews and participants his was probably the least animated, but certainly one of the more open individuals. I left our first interview feeling as though I met a man who could not only

assist me in this study, but one who I could also trust will give me what he sincerely thought on any subject whatsoever. Though most of the interviews were spent with him describing his leadership styles and his vision for higher education in America, he offered me several glances into his personality, and his epistemology of life. He is highly intelligent, quick-witted, but also very down to earth and extremely successful.

As a caveat, upon completing this study, Dr. Johnson left SCCD to become a district Chancellor himself at another institution with three colleges and close to 60,000 enrolled students.

### **SITE SIX: Southern County College**

The last two participants are retired, yet because of their accomplishments and reputation among American community college leaders, they continue to serve various institutions as consultants and mentors for leadership development institutes such as the League of Innovation, NISOD, and The Lakin Institute. They have both retired from the same institution while serving in various executive capacities.

The sixth site is located in the Southern region of the United States and holds a reputation to be one of the largest community colleges in the nation. It boasts an enrollment of almost 63,000 students on 9 campuses and academic centers. It is located in a county that borders a major metropolitan area, yet the county itself is the most densely populated in the state at almost 1,000,000 residents.

The college is expansive and while I visited several campuses, the demographics of the student population are vastly different on each campus. Southern County College's enrollment of 44% male students and 56% female is comprised of 69% White, 11% Black, 8% Hispanic, 4% Asian, .1% Pacific Islander, .3% Multiracial, and 7% not reported.

### **Participant Six: Retired Associate Provost**

When I arranged to meet Marianne Washington, she suggested that we meet at her home on the far south end of the city. I agreed and as I traveled through the town itself, I was stricken by how abruptly the appearances of the houses seem to change. On one side of the street there would be what seemed to be a subdivision of multi-million dollar homes with manicured lawns, while just down the street there were a series of either dilapidated trailer parks or older homes that appeared to be neglected. As I traveled closer to her home, I was



greeted by a neighborhood that donned colored cobblestone, and spacious homes of the upper middle class. Many homes were landscaped with the native tropical foliage of the region while also harboring imported sport and luxury cars in the driveways.

As I arrived at Marianne Washington' home, I was greeted by a large ranch style house that sat eloquently on a corner lot. It's landscaping also matched the neighbors with several species of palm trees, different phyla of flowers, all sitting on a lush green lawn deep that my footprint remained with every step.

Marianne Washington greeted me at the door with a hug and despite our previous meetings, she remains a warm woman whose age is not reflected in her appearance. She is an extremely attractive woman who is in her early sixties, but one who certainly does not look older than her early fifties. Though during previous encounters I have only seen her in professional attire, this time she was dressed quite casually in her exercise attire. She led me through the immaculate house to the kitchen in the rear. There we sat at a granite-style breakfast bar where we started our first interview.

Marianne stands approximately 5 feet five inches tall and has a complexion of milk chocolate. Her complexion is clear and her hair is fashioned in a distinctive mature, yet modern woman's style. She speaks at a moderate pace, but with a slight southern accent that tends to bend at the end of her words. Occasionally, despite her educated demeanor and professionalism, she is so comfortable and unpretentious that she occasionally tends to slip into Black English Vernacular, but always with such a spirited smile that the listener would hardly notice it; her voice was natural and welcoming.

### **Positionality**

Ms. Washington is a mentor and confidant of mine. Not only has she contributed to many of the successes in my present career, she has always been a resource for me to exploit to assist me with student development and conflict resolution as she is a master at them both. Though I believe that sometimes she was reluctant to share with me even during these interviews, I do perceive her a well-intentioned, highly intelligent woman who understands the nature of academic politics more than she will give herself credit for knowing.

### **Career Path**

Though Ms. Washington retired from the school as an Associate Provost, a position likened to a Dean of the Student Affairs, after tenure of almost 30 years she has held many several positions in the college including Executive Assistant to the President. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics, which she has earned from a historically Black college, and a Master's degree in Education. It was at the historically Black college that she admits prepared her academically, but also required that all graduates enroll in etiquette courses to help familiarize them with "that type of environment"; referring to the predominately White culture of the American mainstream. This formal preparation demanded that Black students understand the mainstream culture in many different facets, thereby broadening the experiences for the students as they leave the comfort of the predominately Black environment of an HBCU.

they prepared its graduates for that type of environment. Almost all of my friends are professionals...for their scholars they served a 7 course meal, we had to learn to use every fork, we had to dress appropriately, we had the arts festival. Not only were

humanities taught, but we had to know about the plays, music, artists, the same thing that people learn, but how it was applied. We often talk about Talladega. We had never traveled to any foreign countries but we knew about them because of the training at Talladega. With that diversity came different cultures, they taught us our history, but they taught us about other places too to fit in the world. You can't live in a vacuum or silo, so they taught us how to live out of that silo.

Though Ms. Washington does acknowledge that her travels as a young girl helped her grow beyond the borders of her small town, she still credits those experiences at Talladega for broadening her horizons and allowing her to shed the stigma of the small town citizen

In addition to the academic preparation, Ms. Washington also shares her first teaching experiences in a Kansas City, Mo elementary school. She professes that it was during this 6 year span that she first saw how Blacks were segregated in the ill-equipped schools of the North. She was shocked to see how the security guards would be compelled to monitor Black children in an environment that she characterizes and “unhealthy.”

After working in elementary education for a number of years as a teacher and then eventually an assistant principal, Ms. Washington joined the ranks of the community college, and yet her first significant experiences stemmed from her position as Assistant the President where she learned the responsibilities of being with the president during cabinet presentations, legislative meetings, and various other activities that very few math instructors were privy to. Eventually in a move to integrate one of most remote and least diverse campus at the institution, the president asked that Ms. Washington assume the position of Director of Student Financial Aid. It was in this position that Ms. Washington admitted that:

[M]y career would have taken a different route if I had stayed as the Assistant to the President, because I would have probably got more in the political aspect of things. But being on a campus, that was more aligned with my training, my goals, and my, you know, the things I believed in, the students.

During her tenure at that campus, Ms. Washington was careful to learn everything she could about higher education including assuming responsibilities that were not specifically assigned to her.

I took advantage and learned everything I could. I was hired was to do financial aid. Well if I had only done financial aid, I would not have known anything about how to advise a student, how to read the transcript and a record, how to bring in coursework from other colleges... [Eventually] I was the sit-in administrator without a title for a long time. At night he left me in charge so I did that, I then knew inventory, I knew every piece of equipment and everything that the college owned before they started all that sticker stuff. *Electronic inventory*

Eventually her contributions were recognized and she was reassigned as interim Associate Provost for the most diverse campus of the institution, with the highest number of Blacks and Latinos. Though she was not eligible to apply for the permanent position because she does not hold a doctoral degree, in 1994 she was eventually commissioned to serve in that capacity until she retired in 2008.

### **Vision and Initiatives in Diversity**

In several of the interviews with Ms. Washington, the topic of diversity manifested itself in many different ways. First, as a staunch advocate for ethnic diversity in the

community college, and despite herself being an African-American, she admits her collaborative leadership style prevented her from identifying African-Americans as those who would benefit the most from ethnic diversity initiatives. Although, statements and examples that she offered, like the following, would lead to a listener to believe so. They [the African-American community] needed to know that they belonged here. You've got the Southside, and certain streets and almost everybody you know lives in that neighborhood and they don't venture out. The church is in the neighborhood, the little bar is in the neighbor, and they don't have to catch the bus to go anywhere, so all they know is that neighborhood. Once you start exposing them to other opportunities and other places outside...they start feeling like *I can do this, I can come here, I belong here, and this is a part of something that I can do.*

And though she feels that African-Americans could benefit from experiences outside of their immediate communities, Ms. Washington recognizes another benefit for those of other ethnicities, specifically members of the Board of Trustees, who are not familiar with the culture and academic excellence of the students and citizens of the Southside. She characterizes their reaction to a program that spotlighted scholarship in the predominately African-American high schools as the following:

Senator Smith would always be there and he was a very positive role model in the community and then I had the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Johnson. They would come just to see how it was. When they arrived their eyes would be so open because they had never seen that many well-mannered people, organized to a "t". They went back to the board meeting and to the President's Counsel and told the President all about it...So [the next year] he came. And he could not believe how many people

were there. I am saying to myself, 'What an opportunity for the President of the college to be on program and to greet the community of so many people with high achievements.' He was just overwhelmed. He was floored.

No matter how successful her planning would be, she would rather initiate special programming that could enhance the diversity experience for all groups. She does not admit to being color-blind; instead she states:

I tried to see no race. I tried to see people and work with the needs of all the people. I think in a position like that you have to see all students for their value and what they can bring to the learning community.

Yet when we began a conversation about diversity in leadership, Ms. Washington was not so quick to dismiss race as being unimportant. Ms. Washington would wholly embrace the fact that she contributed to the diversity of every department where she was assigned. Yet she also understands that her talents and knowledge were certainly factors that played into her promotions. Nonetheless, she still believes other characteristics played a role in her procurement of her leadership positions. When asked if she believes that eventually her colleagues looked past her race, she cautiously answered the question, but not without first contradicting herself. She states:

I think so. I do, but what you have to be careful is you are going to always be black. So I am not sure if anyone ever looked beyond your race.. I am sure I helped the bigger plan than they had. They probably looked at me for what I could bring to the table, but I could bring a lot of other [attributes]. I could race, I could bring sex. I could bring all these things in leadership that they needed. So I filled the bill that helped them, which turned out to help me.

This sense of confusion and subtle contradiction piqued my interest, as one of the tenets of DuBois' psychic duality is that it may manifest itself through the subconscious. This is a point in my conversations with Ms. Washington when she may have felt conflicted to a point of self-actualization. Eventually she would return to this very sensitive topic in the interview and make this statement:

There is a certain style and dress code, etiquette, protocol, and other some unsaid things but there are some expectations that you know how to communicate and socialize in that type of environment. Is that not a part of being Black?

Later in the same interview, Ms. Washington follows up with the statement that "We [administrators in the college] are always under the microscope, especially Black folk" which further suggests to me that although in the community college ethnic diversity is an important characteristic among the student body, she still feels as though there may be some room for improvement and altruistic acceptance among executive administrators.

### **Leadership and Authenticity**

Ms. Washington explains her leadership style as one that promotes team building and collaboration. As she details all of her accomplishments and explains how she incorporates shared-ideas into her work as an Associate Provost who manages the Student Affairs division of the college. More pointedly she asserts that successful leaders have to earn the trust and the respect from their colleagues and that also comes from team-building. She states, "You can't work in a cocoon. That has been my greatest strengths--- the ability to work with others. I don't see them as less than or more than, but it's the ability to be able to work with anyone."

She explains that any leader in higher education is required to “mingle” and interact with those whom they lead. Because there is already a wariness and trepidation between a leader and their subordinates, “there is nothing there to put us in a favorable position. When you don’t mingle and people don’t know you, they think the worst about you.” And that is what she attempted to avoid in her daily operations as Associate Provost. The visibility of the leader is extremely important as she states,

I tried to attend every program at least once, every activity that I had on campus so they could see me. You have to be [visible]. I went to every affair in the quad even if I had to travel from the District Office. That is how you let people know that you concerned, you care about them and nothing is too good.

Yet she cautions against becoming too familiar or too comfortable with anyone she has worked with in the past. She insists that although she has earned the respect and admiration of her colleagues, she understands that there are certain boundaries that she recognizes as impermeable and particular borders that can never be crossed.

I have to know how to go to mingle, I knew how to go to the theater, I knew how to have a drink of wine and not get drunk. You have to keep some of that stuff away and you don’t tell your business to everybody. If you don’t want it to get out, don’t tell it because it will get out. As sure as you say ‘this is between me and you’, if that person does not have your back, it will get back to the other people immediately, even before you leave the office.

Despite Ms. Washington’ popularity and effectiveness as a leader, she admits that she is more cognizant of who she is as a person because she has kept a line of demarcation



between her personal life and her public/professional persona. She readily explains to anyone that she is honest in the circles of family, friends, and colleagues, but she purposely “keeps her business to herself.” When I inquired of how she maintains that connection to the cultural mainstream of the White community, she proudly refers back to the point of how she was formerly instructed in college of how to conduct herself. Yet regardless of which public environment she was in, she states that:

You try to be very relaxed. I don’t think you ever really forget about anything especially around White men, I think you always have to know who you are, but you still can have a good time around your peers. I don’t think it is in my personality to let my guard down. It is probably a trust element.

This lack of trust does not seem to tarnish Ms. Washington’s perspective of who she is. According to her, the fact that she subscribes to a non-conformist religion stands as a testament that she is always her authentic self, even when facing ridicule, admonition, or ostracization.

I think it was good because being a Seventh Day Adventist. We weren’t following and doing things like everyone else, so we had to develop strength as Seventh Day Adventist through going to church on Saturday and having people laugh and talk about you.

So when I posed the question if she believes that she is her authentic self, she stated:

Oh yeah, and I think that is where you should be. You have got to have your own set of values and be able to stick to them. If not, you are not going to be happy, you can’t live by someone else’s values. And sometimes you may reap some consequences for

your beliefs, but they are your beliefs then... my daddy said, that ‘you stand up for something or you will fall for anything.’

Now you have to be careful too, because I am not saying that everything you stand for, you have to immediately fight for it. You have to learn strategies and how to not offend, but be able to live. I think that is one of the things I can do.

### **Summary**

Ms. Washington is certainly a woman who has “paid her dues.” Though she is now retired, she is still working very closely with the college and community to enhance the learning and scholarship for young Black women through her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Inc.

What amazed me in our conversations is that as I posed the questions about diversity and psychic duality, she responded as though she had never considered them an issue, nor had she ever believed that she was nothing other than genuinely herself in all of her circles of family, friends, or colleagues. Yet after each interview was over, the conversations continued and she led me to believe that African-Americans, men in particular, could never be their authentic self because of the rampant prejudice that permeates that particular institution.

### **Participant Seven: Retired Vice President for Educational and Student Services**

The last participant of this study has been retired from his former position of Vice President for Educational and Student Services for four years. He formerly served Southern County College in several positions including Vice President for 35 years prior to his retirement. He has earned a undergraduate degree in Finance and a Master's degree in Counseling Education. In addition, he was significant post-graduate work in Educational Leadership with the University of Texas at Austin.

Though Mr. Franks is retired, he still leads instruction as an adjunct professor on the Southern County College urban campus in developmental mathematics and student academic study skills. As I would learn, Mr. Franks is well known in the area as he was born just blocks away from the campus, and still remains active in the local neighborhood association.

As I arrived at the campus to meet Mr. Franks, I am greeted by a very warm security guard who does not inquire about my visit, but instead is very anxious to assist a person who he views as a student. I am quickly escorted through a lobby of computers where students are checking their emails, browsing social media sites, and completing homework, towards another computer lab where students are doing the same.

After waiting for a couple of minutes, Mr. Franks comes in to greet me with a warm handshake and broad smile. He stands about 5 feet, 8 inches tall and dons a thin mustache that is nearly all gray. He is nearly completely bald except for scant hair on the sides of his head that is neatly groomed. He is impeccably dressed with a smart sport coat and contrasting slacks that were obvious of fine quality because of the tailored drape on his slender frame. He wore a tie with an abstract print to accentuate the combination. His skin tone is lighter

than the color of caramel, but upon first glance his freckles make him appear a bit darker than he is. Contrary to the local accent that I detected from other natives, he speaks clearly with an east coast linguistic lift.

He does not have an office, but instead he does escort me to the faculty lounge where he sits directly next to me in the middle of the room.

### **Positionality**

Mr. Frank is another personal mentor and confident. Many times during my career he has offered advice, some degrees of admonishment, and sometimes guidance through my doctoral program. In fact, it was because of Mr. Frank that I enrolled in a doctoral program of educational leadership rather than my intended academic discipline of English Literature. On several occasions Mr. Frank has assisted me in making extremely sound decisions concerning my career and this is what has allowed me a special insider status in which everything that we discussed I can anticipate as being honest and forthcoming.

### **Career Path**

Mr. Frank's experience in higher education is very impressive considering he had no plans to enter the field. As he described to me, he planned to be "a scion of Wall Street" and moved to New York with his wife at the young age of 19. After a few years there, he was drafted into the armed services and was forced to move his wife back to the South while he completed his services. Because of familial responsibilities and commitments, Mr. Franks never returned to the North and settled in as a high school counselor who taught part-time at the college for extra money.

Eventually he was noticed for his commitment and student appeal so he was the offered a job as a full-time instructor which eventually turned into a program director, to other positions as Associate Vice President to Assistant Vice President, until he reached the pinnacle of his career as the Vice President. Throughout his tenure with the college, Mr. Franks was responsible for the creation of various projects including developing a dual enrollment program, a transitional program for at-risk college students, a collegiate high school, and the first community college baccalaureate program in the state.

And though Mr. Franks began his doctoral studies at the University of Texas at Austin, once again his commitment to his family members compelled him to return to work rather than finish his studies. Regardless of his academic credentials, Mr. Franks has earned a national reputation for developing curriculum for community college students, developing leadership seminars for minority executive leaders within Lakin Institute and other professional development consortiums, and chairing a number of state and regional committees on academic articulation and student affairs, as well as standing as the lead consultant for the local university's 2+2 degree programs.

Yet despite all of his achievements and the recent economic challenges of many schools, Mr. Franks confesses that he is not done with his work in the community college. He states:

Actually, quite honestly, my plan was and my plan still is to go to a little bigger stage and to do some things...I had a chance to do a small bit of work with a university in D.C. Again financially, they weren't able to sustain it, but my point is that I continue to do things. This for me is just a love for me.

### **Vision and Initiatives in Diversity**

During our interviews, Mr. Franks spoke very candidly about his rise to an executive office in the community college. And though he did express some regrets and disappointments, he also admits that he felt “very blessed and fortunate” to have been able to make a significant difference in his local community. Yet as he reflected on some of his encounters with Whites in his home institution as well as during state-wide committee meetings, he remembers that he was disappointed in some of the racism that he encountered, but not entirely surprised.

I had the honor of serving as the chair of the statewide council of student affairs, which are all of the chief student affairs officers of the community colleges and there were some good old boys. In addition I served on the state board of community colleges and yeah the racism was there. Sometimes they wouldn’t acknowledge your presence...

One of the more memorable episodes that he characterizes as blatant act of racism involved the president himself at the college when he attempted to propose to the Board of Trustees a very unpopular and potentially inflammatory initiative that would limit the number of sports that the college offered.

Franks: Now we had decided as cabinet that were we going to reduce the number of sports due to financial reasons, and yet when the president went before the Board of Trustees, he held me out to come and talk about it. He said that I voted to decrease the number of sports that we had. That was one of those times when I had to publically

say, “We voted as a cabinet. And I don’t think it is appropriate that I be cast as the villain in this plot.” He didn’t like that... he knew it was the truth and so he couldn’t deny it or come back later and say ‘why’d you say that?’ But his way [to get back at me] was not speak to me for about a month. [Laughter] and there were others like that, but again philosophically I just felt the need as a man to say that you can’t just treat me any kind of way.

**Me: Why you? Why hang you out to dry?**

Franks: Well for two reasons: number one, the sports themselves were sports in which African-Americans were primarily participating, so he thought *if I can show that this African-American supports it, then you [the board] shouldn’t argue the point*. Also to address the concerns of the African-Americans who were coaches at the time, who might have had some issues with it and so the arrows may be deflected to me [Franks] as opposed to him[ he president]. Quite honestly, he is the one who brought forward the prospect.

Franks then explains that there were stressors that regularly stemmed from de facto segregation whereas programs such as dual enrollment, that could have benefitted a more diverse population, were strategically placed in predominately White high schools, while other schools that enrolled more minorities were ignored.

[Consider] my alma mater and talk about initiatives like dual enrollment... because that community was not benefitting from a wonderful program that was intended for students to make a transition to college and to make college more affordable: the dual enrollment program. There were no dual enrollment courses at the local High School,

I shouldn't say none, but *all* of them were directed towards the Pinellas Center of the Arts which 99% of the student were Caucasian.

Considering the racism that Mr. Franks endured, it stands to question how he challenged it or managed it for so many years. As he explained, he did like a number of the participants of this study and maintained a distinct separation between his personal life and his professional career. He insists that during his tenure as third in command of the college, there was a great deal of "one-upmanship and backstabbing in upper administration" and it sometimes manifested itself in the form of racism. He explains "My way of getting around it was professionally I was in there with them, but personally I wasn't. I didn't small talk; and at that time I didn't socialize with them. I was very, very private and I let it be known."

Yet despite the separation between the two, there were occasions when Mr. Franks opted to blur the line and allow his peers to glimpse into his humble beginnings in an attempt to understand his perspective on issues of race and privilege. He would passively remind them that not only was he well versed in the policy adoption and academically prepared, but he was quite possibly better prepared than they were. He asserts:

When things got too hifalutin in cabinet, I always brought out my story that in fact my instructors couldn't go to the local state universities to pursue their Masters and Doctorates. And incidentally the insanity of the situation of that time said that if you will go north of a Mason-Dixon we will pay for some of your graduate study, so my instructors did not get degrees from the local state universities, they got degrees from Columbia, and Penn, and Rutgers, and Indiana. So I didn't lack for preparation in my education. And so I always used to trot that out when they talked about... and yet I



was born literally a stone's throw away from here. My family bought a piece of the [housing] project and I'm proud to say that I was born and bred in the projects. During this part of the first interview, Mr. Franks seemed have a personal epiphany when I inquired of his perspective on DuBois' psychic duality. He is the first and only participant who admits that there was a possibility that he was not his authentic self during his entire career. He also questions if his "hypocrisy" stemmed from the racism that he experienced or expected within the workforce. He concedes the point that for survival or to prevent him from being marginalized within a community that was often hostile, he would sometimes subordinate his views or even mask what he considered were his honest emotions. And though his subordination may have contributed to some of the stress that he experienced during his career, he considered this a coping strategy to remain effective as one the only African-American executive administrator on the president's cabinet.

[T]he mask that I had to wear, and this is the one of duality, is the one that says I couldn't let them see me sweat. I had to stay strong in the face of some of that [racism] and I had to demonstrate the kind of integrity that would be above reproach. So I didn't have always the ability to express the raw emotion that I was feeling. There were some times when I did that too, but for the most part I was able to keep it to myself. But the duality of that said that I wasn't something someone different than who I was; it was simply my ability to manifest myself in a different way and not just in another way built in a way would allow me to continue to be effective--- because if I fell into the trap, they could marginalize me and I couldn't be as effective.

His reflection was not only honest, but what he does can relate to Dr. Peterson's toolbox of strengths. As a means to further his own agenda of student success, academic

rigor, and professional development of faculty and staff, Mr. Franks felt compelled to balance his emotional responses with the practicality of survival for a much larger purpose.

### **Leadership Style and Authenticity**

In my conversations with Mr. Franks, I gathered that he is what some may consider a team player who found a balance during his career to express his beliefs and his opinions, while also trusting the leadership in his president. By his own account, he remained at the institution long enough to witness the transformation of a long-standing president into a “stern, dictatorial leader”, who sometimes lacked compassion and could be quite vindictive when crossed. It was this part of the first interview that he began to define his effectiveness and leadership style as he related to this president whether it be through agreement or dissent. It is because of this need to dissent sometimes that allowed him to view himself as the lone voice. He recalls what he refers to as the “low point in his career” nearest to his retirement:

I felt that I was duty bound and obligated to represent fairly the needs of students and the needs of faculty and staff at the college. I will never forget upon my retirement, was one of those low points in my career. Low points in the sense that I expected my colleagues to better support, not me because I was on my way out, but better support the needs of faculty and staff at the college. And I was there arguing for things for faculty and my colleagues other administrators sat silent and I heard myself talking and I said to myself, “I am retiring in a month and here I am fighting this man literally about significant issues and no one else is saying a word, they are all scared.” ...People just would not challenge the president on the issues, but mine was one that I always felt the Lord would take care of me. So I had to at least express my beliefs about things. There were times when I had to subordinate my own beliefs and

feelings and I did that, I was a good soldier. But there were times I felt I needed to assert what I think were the right ideals and ideas for us in education.

And yet he is still critical of himself as a leader in the institution as he recalls what he should have done when I inquired about his work with succession planning and preparing the new generation of leaders in the community. He admits that he as well as the institution has failed in the preparation and collaboration of the future leaders:

that is one of my frustrations and one of the things that perhaps one of the things that I wasn't as successful at as the senior administrator here at SCC. It's kind of one of the things that I always hearken back to my colleagues who are still here to talk about it's a fact perhaps that we didn't find the ways, and to some extent we couldn't... but it starts right here fundamental at this institution. Our collaborating together and beginning to understand some of the ways you distinguish yourself.

I had the advantage and I was lucky. Someone noticed me, they took a liking to me and I moved on from there. I have done that with a couple of our folks here, and I have offered that opportunity to every brother and sister who is here. Some have taken advantage of it, some have not. It is a fundamental failure on our part if we don't collaborate.

### **Summary**

Mr. Franks is a scholar of great experience and wisdom. As a testament of the number and quality of contributions he has made to the growth and maturity of the community college growth, he remains a mentor for both standing and aspiring leaders throughout the nation. Not only is his name circulated in circle of the community college, but his expertise

on curriculum development and transfer articulation has been an invaluable resource to four year universities and colleges.

Mr. Franks speaks very candidly about the challenges he faced while rising through the ranks from counselor to Vice-President in a state system that historically did not have the reputation of being very open to integration. Yet at the same time, he feels a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction with how he contributed to the expansion of the community colleges in the state. He does not express any disdain or bitterness toward those persons who may not have embraced during his early years, but certainly he is grateful to those who recognized his talents and potential as he continued to climb through the ranks.

Mr. Franks understands the necessary balance between being one's authentic self and subordinating to the dominant culture of the institution. It is this acknowledgment and his participation in this study that has asked that he reflect on subconscious identity and continue to identify his motivations for success, even in his semi-retirement.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **Themes and Analytical Discussion**

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to present a discussion of this research through the identification of several recurring themes. Collectively these themes exists as patterns in the data that help to determine the answers to the following questions: (1) How do African-American executive administrators in the community colleges view themselves as members of the governing body of the institution? (2) How do African-American administrators balance their public personas and their personal perceptions of race when attempting to execute the duties required by their position? And (3) How does race and ethnicity contribute to the decisions and policies that are created and enforced by African-American administrators in the community college?

Though the analysis of these themes frames itself in the theoretical concepts of Multidimensional Model for Racial Identity (MMRI) and Cross' Nigrescence Model, it is the reflexive/explorative nature of ethnomethodology that provides an opportunity to survey how each of the participants interpret their positions as African-Americans, as well as how their identities relate to their careers and their personal lives. It is in this chapter that I will discuss the cultural implications of the ever-evolving identities of African-American community college leaders who attempt to navigate their professional careers within a possibly hegemonic mainstream culture of White America.

### **Overview of Themes**

The study of cultural identity among college leaders is quite complex and difficult to navigate. Though I had my presuppositions before the study ensued, the amount of rich data that I gathered through the interviews and observations warrants a more in-depth study than what I can cover in these pages. As I interviewed and observed several participants, I acknowledge that I have only scratched the surface of understanding and interpreting their experiences, philosophies, and positionality. And though this study took at least two years to complete, much like other qualitative inquiries, I realize that each participant had more to share, other issues to ponder, and in some cases more maturing to do.

Though I do acknowledge that my study is not exhaustive, nor is this study intended to be representative of all African-American community college executive administrators, I do recognize emerging themes that may help us learn the coping strategies and personality traits of seven of the most dynamic, energetic, and popular community college chancellors, presidents, and vice presidents that this generation has ever witnessed. Through this reflexive sharing by successful community college executive officers, the following strategies can be used as identifiable characteristics in understanding how all African-Americans can balance their personal identities within cultural mainstream, without enduring the stress that DuBois describes in his theory of psychic duality. Those recurring themes are: (1) understanding one's personal philosophies including foundational skills established during identity development, (2) the establishment and maintenance of both a public and private arena where cultural identification can be fluid, (3) and recognizing that there is a generational shift that continues to occur that changes the perspectives leaders and their perception of their effectiveness.

Overall it is the cultural retelling of experiences and coping strategies, and the observations that I made to determine these participants' influence that has led me to believe that DuBois' almost century old theory of the African-American psychic duality still exists, but the stressors that he characterized have been subsumed by the reinforcement of African-American traditions, as well the simple passing of time.

### **Theme One: Understanding a Personal Philosophy**

The data that emerged from the observations and interviews can be categorized into several different genres or themes. The most prevalent theme was the expressed perception that each participant credited their success, and in some cases their longevity in community college education, to understanding where they stood on certain issues concerning higher education, while also adhering to their own personal epistemologies. Each participant expressed an acute awareness of their personal philosophies concerning the role of higher education and cultural identity. This is not to suggest that each participant was afrocentric or in anyway radically different from their White peers' understanding of their selves. Instead, the data that emerged suggested that these particular seven administrators recognized and in their eyes accurately described their character, beliefs, and perceptions about their selves as well as their impact on higher education in the United States.

In getting to the point that each participant understands who they are, the process seemed to be rather similar. As Cross' Model of Nigrescence (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001) describes, all of the participants seem to have developed a sense of African-American identification through the Pattern A typology: forming their identities through the formative years of infancy through adolescence. All of the participants expressed a fundamental

appreciation and acknowledgement of their early familial influence whether the family member was educated formally or not. All of the participants professed to come from a modest background where their parents were either high school graduates or high school drop-outs; none of which borne from a background that would allow for lavish lifestyles of frivolous spending. In fact, of the seven participants, the only participant who may have been close to anywhere near middle class was Marianne Washington, whose father was a deputy sheriff in a small county in the state where she resided. She admits that there was some privilege for her to attend school and take regular trips to Chicago from the south, but she cautions against people assuming she was raised wealthy or even middle class. She acknowledges this through the retelling of this story:

When we graduated [from high school], we went to church for graduation we had to have our gloves and hats, and we had our little minks on. You know I was poor and when we got to that part of the outfit I said, 'Woo, Daddy I need me a mink collar.' My daddy said, 'You better get you an education and buy your own mink collar.' So I guess I was raised a little differently than a lot of people at the school. There was an expectation. We were poor. My mother sent me to school to get my degree. I stayed headstrong I finished in four years. I was going to get my degree. Now the other girls were there to get husbands, but not me.

Yet despite the modest upbringing of all the participants, each of them was influenced by their parents' hard work and dedication to a formal education for their children. This instilled a sense of independence and assertiveness that would not soon be forgotten. Harriet Brown recalls how her parents forced her to grow up independent:



At 15, they let us, each one of us got a driver's license, taught us how to drive, we'd drive the car, go places, do errands, you know stuff like that. Um, they raised us to really be independent. So there we were, and then you know we all got scholarships, we went off to college and when we needed money it was five dollars in the envelope that you got in the mail. So that wasn't working. And so we all got jobs. You know, they knew how they wanted us to be. They wanted us to be upright, independent and that's how we all turned out.

It is this foundation of self-awareness that allowed each of the participants to build upon the understanding of how they were to navigate throughout life without compromising their integrity or undermining who they were at their cores. Dr. Brown insists that she would sell Tyler roses on the streets of Dallas before she compromises who she is.

The acknowledgement of who they were and their humble beginnings does not suggest that they remained humble or even quiet during most of their years. As in the self-reflexive centrality pillar of MMRI (Kelly as cited in Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998), each of the participants acknowledge a consistent growth into the persons that they have become. In other words, while understanding their selves asks that they also understand how they arrived at their personalities as people first, and then leaders second. Mr. Franks credits his outspoken nature to Black Nationalist influences of the 1960s, yet how he learned in his later years to temper his rhetoric to become more effective:

Being a child of the 60s, and a follower of Stokely Carmichael, Rap Brown, SNCC and those kinds of things, I endured perhaps the shame of not understanding the value of Dr. King as a 60s radical, but I did understand making a change from the outside. It's the lesson that we learned, that we didn't learn well in the 60s and the early 70s.

We thought we could just stomp it out...what did Gil Scott Heron say: 'the revolution will not be televised?'

Dr. Scott to this day still articulates his defiance and outspoken nature as he describes how he responds to conflicts in his institution:

I wear my emotions on my sleeve and you need to know what is wrong...You have a lot of people that don't like that, but most do. I won't say a lot [of people], but I will say a few people think that I should operate differently. A few think I should be a little more conservative... My biggest barrier though and I won't say barrier, but my assets, my greatest curse is my honesty.

It is the knowledge of one's talents and deficiencies that makes a good leader in a potentially uninviting or unwelcoming environment. Without this astute self-awareness of who they were as complex people with multiple dynamic identities outside of their professional environments, they all admit that they probably would not have achieved as much as they have as leaders in the community college. Dr. Peterson explains it this way:

I am a highly complex woman, highly complex. I am an intellectual. I like to read Cornell West, but give me a romance novel and I like to read that too. I watch my soap operas every other day. I can go to the best restaurants and understand how to select a good bottle of wine, but also when I go around my friends and they say 'Let's get an 8-Ball [malt liquor],' I know what they are talking about too.

And while all of the participants may have established some degree of maturation and self-realization, their personal growth, development, and identities have not yet ceased to shift or change. As Cross' Model of Nigrescence (1971) describes Stages 4 and 5 as the

finalization and advocacy stages, each participant seems to waver back and forth between the two; never quite achieving a sense of finality and stagnation, but instead continuing to grow and find new ways of balancing their own African-American culture and navigating through other cultures. These are not people who are narrow-minded or resistant to change and growth. Dr. Johnson states this about himself and the way he views growth:

People don't respond well to change. If you tell me that what I am doing has no value, or has little value, or has diminishing value, I am going to take that personally. There are two responses in my view of that (1) either you say I need to change something, learn another way of doing it... Or [2] you can say that here is the vision and in order to get there you go through these 3-year benchmarks, and if anytime during those three years the benchmark is not met, then we gotta have another type of conversation.

For all of the leaders in the study, their personal assessment of their effectiveness is about growth, adaptation, and change.

## **Theme Two: Maintaining Public and Private Arenas and Personas**

One of the more purposeful, intentional, and what I hypothesize as probably the most crucial strategies of all the participants was to create and maintain two separate worlds through which they would navigate: the public and the private.

As expressed by all of the participants, they intentionally operated in two worlds of reality that helped them deal with the stress that Dubois spoke about in his early writing. Though some may not recognize or even admit to this navigation as a means to avoid stress, even those who say they have been their authentic selves have admitted that maintaining

some sense of balance between their public and private lives is a necessary strategy to maintain a sense of connection to their cultural roots. In the MMRI schematic (1998), one of the pillars stemming from racial identity is that of *Racial Regard*. This dimension gives birth to the public and private perceptions of African-Americans as they view themselves as part of a group, as well as how they predict others will view them in public. This is the dimension that also gives rise to either the self-hatred or self-esteem that defines the degree of Blackness for an individual.

The public arena is teeming with the expectations of being a community college executive officer. It seemed to be spawned from the need to exist not just as a representative of the college, but more so as the leader of the institution who sets policies, controls budgets, settles disputes, articulates the vision, and devises strategies that allow for the execution of the vision. The public arena is described as anywhere and everywhere; and therefore the arena demands that the college representative conduct themselves in a manner that is reflective of a community college leader and official.

The public arena was easily identifiable to all of the participants. This arena would ask that each participant stand as a reflection of a college leader and the “face” of the institution. This arena would ostensibly produce a public figure whose behavior, demeanor, language, and interactions with others would mirror those expected behaviors of a college president or executive leader. Though the public arena is directly spawned from the college setting and interactions surrounding the institution’s affairs, this public arena did not confine itself within the borders of the campus, but instead it demanded that each participant remain cognizant of their positions and influence far beyond even the boundaries of college campus.

The public arena's population consists of co-workers, including board members and peers at other institutions; subordinates; members of the community; and students. Because of the broad number of stakeholders of the public arena, collectively, each participant feels as though they always have to be keenly aware of their influence and representations on a local, national, and even international level. Therefore they intentionally seek out opportunities in the private arena to be less guarded, and viewed by others as an individual, without the attachment or stigma of the college. Quite often, several of the participants would state that they were still representative of the college even while on vacation, at the anesthetists, or completing other mundane activities; and therefore, felt a need to maintain a professional standing that reflected their position at the college.

This does not suggest that the participants dislike or do not welcome that public arena, in fact there were several participants who enjoyed interacting with constituents and clients as they enjoy being the "face of the college" in public. This expressly provided a means to promote the institution, offers fundraising opportunities, and provides a chance for people to identify the person who sits as the CEO or executive administrator of the college. Each participant expressly understood that the public arena is omnipresent; a reality that many other leaders who have not lasted as long may have forgotten or ignored. The public arena can work to their advantage by providing opportunities to partner with others, advance a particular initiative, or opening up an opportunity for professional growth. On the other hand, the public arena can also work to the demise of the CEO who ignores the arena's omnipresence and does not act or conduct themselves in the manner befitting a college leader.

This public arena does not confine itself to the self-reflexive nature of ethnomethodology. Instead, as retold through the story of Dr. Harriett Brown, the perception of what is acceptable of African-Americans in the public realm is often projected and led by the CEO of the institution. In other words, despite what Dr. Peterson asserts, sometimes we find that the leader of institution really defines what is acceptable in the public realm and therefore attempts to dictates or recreate the culture itself. Dr. Brown is an example of just that type of leader. One of the glaring topics that emerges from her interviews was the aloofness she feels in the region where she has worked and lived over the past 20 years.

When asked about the reasons for her disconnection, she explains:

I think when you move somewhere at 40 years old, it is just kind of difficult. I am not a member of a church, and that's not because I don't believe in joining a church. I attend, but I have not joined one. I did not become active in my sorority because anything I get into, I get into it whole-heartedly. I knew I would probably over-extend and the job is so consuming that I just don't do anything else.

Though she initially offers preoccupation as a reason for her aloofness, she later opens up and admits:

The one's in my age group don't have the same kind of cultural identity. It is almost as though they need to make it in a different way than we have, and I can't even get in conversations with people here about it. I have people that I socialize with, and they invite me places from time to time, and I even have people over to my home, but part of that is probably more *me* than *them*.

It is this purposeful disconnection from the immediate African-American community, despite her activism in other African-American communities. That speaks to her perception of this

public arena. As she explains throughout all of our conversations, she looks at this African-American community as being “different.” It is because of this perception that she sought to improve the culture by objecting openly to the separate African-American graduation and the behavior exhibited by the participants:

My expectations were just a lot different from what I saw when I got here. They expected me to be more pro-Black than I am. I am pro-Black, but I have never been a fist waving [Black]. The Black folk! Oh my God, oh my God, the noise! You could not hear the names being called or anything. So, the following Monday the vice-president who was Black, and grew up in that community said, ‘You don’t understand, that’s just what they do. That is just what they do.’ I said there are standards. There are certain ways that you behave in certain situations and that behavior is inappropriate... I am just saying we have to raise the standards.

But the question remains: Whose standards are appropriate? Viewing her perception through a Critical Race Theorist lens, it is White privilege and standards that define what is acceptable (Bell, 1987; Delgado & Stephancic, 2001; Delgado & Stephancic, 1999). Though Dr. Brown would disagree that she subscribed to such standards, her criticism of separate celebrations and subcultural differences does not translate to her support for the Presidents’ Roundtable and the NCBA. Her reasoning? According to Dr. Brown, those organizations promote positive African-American experiences and they celebrate with “decorum.”

Dr. Brown’s story is punctuated by Dr. Peterson’s explanation and assessment of contemporary hip-hop culture. When she is asked about the authenticity of rebellious artists and expressions of tattoos and song lyrics that permeate that genre today, she responds:

There is a difference here, when you want to be your authentic self, you then you have to be prepared to live with the consequences of you being you. If you really want me to break it down, I don't think that it is about her being authentic. I think that it is about here being caught up in *Thug Life*. It is cool to be ignorant, not completing high school, it has been cool to sit around and have babies. It has been cool...I was talking to someone on Facebook and it is cool to use some of the trendy language. "Come on, Son" or "nephew." I don't think it is authentic; it is the environment in which they live. The environment in which I live and work, requires me to have a different set of language...but the beautiful part about it is that the *authentic* Diane, is also able to have conversations with you, my board, go out into the community and that community is very diverse.

Dr. Scott is also somewhat critical of the popular culture of today. He speaks directly to the instability and the adolescent allure to dysfunction by stating:

It is actually scary that is more than just the dissemination of knowledge that folks need, they need to make a commitment to be better people. We are not just dealing with the lure of celebrities or the rich or wealthy; we are dangling out with people with no parameters around values or principles so folks are selling their soul for a dollar and it's really sad to see this, especially in politics. Some of the people who are supposed to be wonderful examples to the world do the most idiotic things. I don't get that...I just I am concerned about the world that we live in.

The advent of the public arena yields a necessary component that I identify as the *public persona*. Throughout each interview, as each participant described their experiences and encounters with others, they found that it is a primary responsibility to first act



appropriately as representatives of their families and upbringing and then secondarily as an executive community college administrator. This was one of the key characteristics of each of the participant. In all cases, it is the influence and compilations of several previous experiences that provided the motivation for each participant to act as what they deemed appropriate in public, rather than in the manner that reflected their professional position. This public persona for all of the participants seemed to be shaped by their parental, spiritual, and cultural influences. Just as the salience of MMRI (1998) suggests that the experiential wisdom and talents do play a key role in their decision making and even their various promotions throughout their careers, all the participants ultimately credit the centrality of MMRI to create and maintain the fundamental skillset of strong work ethic, assertiveness, good communication skills, and a connection to their own spirituality. These skills were articulated early in the interviews and their parents were consistently given credit for them. These are the skills that set the foundation for the shaping of their basic personality traits.

The private arena is that environment which allows the CEO to regroup, relax, and otherwise be their selves without the expectation of working or being a representative of any college campus. Though there would be some regular intersection between the two, it was articulated several times that there were distinct differences and intentional lines of demarcation between the two arenas

In the private arena, each participant can expect to be their authentic selves without fear of judgment from the cultural mainstream. This does not mean such judgment does not exist. As illustrated in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century volatile debate argument between Marcus Garvey (1969) and W.E.B. DuBois (1999), degrees of blackness do exist within the

subculture, and people are judged according to these gradations of blackness. Dr. Peterson asserts:

I know that I have friends of mine, my church friends; I am very specific in the fact that they don't call me Dr. Peterson. No, I'm Di, I'm Dianne. There has to be a safe place where I have to have that kind of conversation. I think that that is different than saying that I do that because I am Black.

Dr. Johnson expresses a certain degree of pride when speaking about his African-American décor in his office "...that's myself. Why am I going to hide that? I'm proud of that." While Dr. Scott expresses the same sentiment when speaking of his office.

Mr. Franks speaks about it while discussing the neighborhood he grew up in:

My family bought a piece of the projects and I'm proud to say that I was born and bred in the projects. I belong to an association called the XYZ Park Projects Nostalgic Inc., we have a 501-c3 and everything. I wear my hat every month and I let people know.

It is this degree of cultural awareness that defines what blackness is to these participants. It is the continued expansion of the 5<sup>th</sup> self-awareness stage of Cross' Model of Nigrescence (1991; 1971; 1995; Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001) that promotes the self-reflexive awareness and expressions of African-American culture, through the reinforcement and exhibition of tangible artifacts and the articulation of spoken language.

### **Theme Three: Acknowledging Generational Differences**

Despite the congruent themes that described the familial influence and the distinct private and public personas, there was a significant split that occurred in the data which may

reflect an evolution or transition in how African-American executive administrators express their discontent and value their input at various institutions. As each participant described their public personas, expressed dissent, or even articulated their vision of the future community college, it became evident that the two younger presidents' personas and expectations were quite different than most of the older participants. The generational differences can be identified and categorized through an understanding of the philosophical differences between American Baby-Boomers and Generation Xers.

Baby Boomers are identified by several different social theorists as being those individuals who were generally born between the years 1944-1964. They are often characterized by their strong work ethic and their connection and devotion to the employer. They are results driven, but do not shy away from controversy or challenging obstacles in the direct path of expressed goals. On the other hand, Generation Xers, characterized as those individuals who were born between 1965-1981, are often viewed as people who are also hard-working, but are not seen as being committed to one company or one vision. They are often in positions for short terms which may be correlated to the profile of an individual who is not results driven, but one who prefers that a work environment be conducive to relationship building, harmonious, and fulfilling through compensation, money and benefits (Yu & Miller, 2005).

Through a basic understanding of each generation, it is reasonable to understand the most glaring contrast between the two groups of participants. The Baby-Boomer executive leaders addressed the notion of pluralism and diversity on a level that in their eyes was effective and more aligned with the practices of the rebellion from the insider perspective. Though they could easily recognize racism or the unintentional ostracization of minorities

because of policies or procedures, these older Baby-Boomers found it more effective to work within the system to change it rather than to abandon it. They found that being an ethnic minority as well as a minority in numbers, limited their opportunities to “fight every battle”; so instead, it is considered more advantageous to be rather judicial and discerning in their confrontations and even going so far as to address public concerns on an individual basis in private. This dynamic mirrors a previous study of African-American corporate CEOs that characterizes such a position as “an advocate working within the system” (Slay, 2003).

At over 60 years old, Dr. Campbell describes her perspective on combatting and addressing issues that do not necessarily align with her own. As she explains her idea of compromise and persistence, it is apparent that she advocates working within the culture as a systemic change agent, rather than to abandon it for a less challenging venue. She asserts:

Persistence has to be there and when you don't get the answer that you need then you look for other ways to get the answer. And when you find barriers there, you find ways to work around them. You don't let it stop you because everything that happens even with what I need to do, I can't complete without going through other people. There are some things that I can, but the nuts and bolts of it is that I have to work through so many other people, so many other departments, and different personalities. So the key is understanding how to deal with personalities and maybe how to go over and around, but at the same time not burning bridges, because eventually you have to always circle around; you may have to go back there again. That is where I am and how I operate.

Yet as Dr. Campbell continues, she shares with me that sometimes she remains quiet while accessing the potential conflict. She is once again the only person of color on the President's Cabinet, so she admits that she is often facing overwhelmingly disconnected colleagues.

Each situation is different in terms of how you size it up and sometimes I'll sit and I'll listen and I won't say anything to see how it's going to play out and if it plays out the way I'm thinking it should, then I may say something and I may not. If it is not going to add to the conversation then why am I going to say something and so I don't. I do not suggest that each advocate was the lone representative voice, yet as each older participant retold their narrative encounters, they all expressed some sense of dissatisfaction and frustration that they were sometimes the only ones who "got it." Each participant was very discriminating when choosing their conflicts, but yet they were also very often dismayed at their own perception that progression towards full inclusion would move at glacier speed, with so few voices in actual support of eliminating the bias and racism.

Mr. Franks admits to sometimes "subordinating his views for the benefit of survival." As important and influential as he was during his career, he still speaks of the vindictive nature of those presidents who find themselves challenged or denied certain liberties either by the governing board or by nature of circumstance:

He states:

He never wanted to hear 'no'. And to some extent I could understand his position when it comes to student outcomes, but when it involved his leadership staff...I had to subordinate myself for simple survival. Once again it was about economics.

Though each participant described their encounters with varying degrees of racism and conflicts, the two Generation Xers in the study were adamant about their ability and

willingness to leave the institution if the environment continued to be problematic or uninviting. Rather than to engage in a long embroiled battle with racism, or choose to be work in an environment that does not systemically support the vision of diversity, pluralism, or even their own leadership agenda of the same issues, the Generation Xers specifically Drs. Peterson and Scotts were willing to “take their talents elsewhere.” This confidence in their abilities did not appear as arrogance, but instead it reflected a sense of impatience and urgency on the part of each CEO to serve the students, their clients, and exist as a leader who demanded the need for progressive inclusion. In addition it also reflects a low tolerance for the social problem of racism that most would agree should not exist at all. This sense of frustration and impatience is reflective of recent research that seeks to explore the generational differences between female leaders in higher education. Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak (2000) explain that “[Generation Xers] are committed to more revolutionary change and are frustrated by the slower pace of change.” (as cited in Kezar & Lester, 2008)

As Dr. Peterson reflects on her effectiveness as a college president, she also provides commentary on her maintaining a balance even in the face of criticism when she compares what she has had to endure to the Baby Boomer generation. She says:

I think that is also very generational for me. I recognize that as a Gen Xer in here, and I have been thinking about some of these differences, that I will maintain a different perspective as an African-American president as those who have been in the system a while. There is a different type of balance that we have made between ethnicity and gender, and it is very different than those folks I think who had to come in and fight the battles and laid the ground work for us to be able to walk in.

And though she does recognize a stark contrast, she does not fault the Baby Boomers for their professional strategies and coping mechanisms when dealing with race. She does confess that they move a bit slower than she would like, but instead of demeaning them for it, she uses them as the example of patience.

[B]ecause I have benefitted from desegregation, I am a beneficiary from mixed race communities. All of these have prepared me to see the world a little bit differently. And if we really are the first generation removed from the Civil Rights movement, our perspective about culture is somewhat different. I think that some of us coming into it, our first thing that we see is not race, there is a very different relationship that we have with White folks and the way that we process information is somewhat different as well/ I can remember very distinctly being at the Roundtable and me and my colleagues will have processed something fairly quickly in a very different way... that's simply generational.

Another example of the willingness to exchange thoughts and emotions without the baggage of arrogance was more telling in the observed sense of respect and admiration each Baby-Boomer expressed for the older, more seasoned executive administrators. During all of my interactions with the Presidents' Roundtable retreats, meetings, and social events, each of the Generation Xers often deferred to the leadership and wisdom of the older Baby Boomers. I often overheard and even engaged in several conversations during which the Baby Boomer would offer guidance or resolution in a particular situation or conflict. The confidence that the Generation Xers exhibited is not synonymous with arrogance, but instead it provided an

opportunity for those of a shared public arena, to exchange coping strategies for developing and maintaining that public persona.

During one memorable evening in the spring of 2011, the Presidents' Roundtable held a private dinner honoring the recently commissioned president of the American Association of Community Colleges, Dr. Walter Bumphus. Though the purpose of the affair was one to pay homage to Dr. Bumphus as a African-American leader, I could not help but notice that very few of the older members circulated to mingle, but instead the younger Generation Xers catered to them. I overheard conversations and mentoring sessions that involved bond strategies, faculty concerns, privacy issues, and even a bit of gossip. It was then that I understood that this entire research endeavor on identity, would answer my immediate questions, but there was much more research demanded of this population of well-dressed African-American men and women who balanced their lives while also impacting others.



**CHAPTER SIX:  
SUMMARY OF STUDY, DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH  
QUESTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND  
PERSONAL REFLECTION**

As this qualitative inquiry only provides a broad understanding of the reflexive identities of a very narrow population, this chapter provides a brief summary of the study, offers specific responses to the proposed research questions, while also making further suggestions for research, and exploring implications for the community college.

Because qualitative research is inductive in nature (Crotty, 2005; Merriam, 2002), it is understandable that my reconstruction of ideas and premises may lead the reader in a different direction compared to another researcher with a different cultural identity. Yet nonetheless, this chapter concludes with a brief personal reflection that details my experiences in conducting this research that include; what I learned about our contemporary leaders and their strategies to promote cultural inclusion, how I view African-American community college executives as societal gatekeepers for diversity, and lastly how the African-American has transcended from an oppressed uneducated population of newly-freed slaves to become a recognized necessity in the maintenance of our pluralistic American culture.

### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this ethnomethodological study was to explore and extrapolate the challenges and coping mechanisms that African-American executive administrators of the community college encountered, adopted, and created while balancing their authentic selves. The data were collected from a series of interviews and observations of seven community college chancellors, presidents, vice presidents, and one associate provost who all identified as being African-American. The study called into question the validity of W.E.B. DuBois' theory of the stressors that stemmed from the psychic duality of African-Americans.

The participants were located in various geographic regions throughout the United States in order to maximize my variation. I conducted a series of three interviews in person, on their respective campuses; during attendance at a national convention; or during a telephone conversation. I also observed each participant in both professional and private settings during a consortium retreat; several luncheons and dinners; executive board meetings; and general assembly meetings of the Presidents' Roundtable, an organization of African-American executive administrators in the community college. There were three men and four women who participated.

The study was guided by two distinct identity theories: Multidimensional Model for Racial Identity (MMIRI) and Cross' Theory of Nigrescence which allowed me to interpret each participant's experiences through a framework of acceptable theories that would allow for the reflexive nature of ethnomethodology.

### **Responses to Research Questions**

**(1) How do African-American executive administrators in the community college view themselves as members of the governing team of the institution?**

The answer to this question varies greatly because of the complexity of the position. Yet in keeping with the basic tenets of the American community college, all of the participants articulated a deep commitment to student access and success, and meeting the needs of the immediate community and global community. As they were asked to reflect on their duties as a leader, all of them expressed a need to increase diversity awareness on their campuses, as well as on a national level; whereby assisting populations of students, faculty, and staff in understanding the benefits of full inclusion. Yet after review of their motives, visions, and executions, I theorize that they view their selves as single entities in a much larger society of advocates for the tenets of the community college. They are the leaders of their various institutions, yet all of the participants also viewed themselves as people who wish to do the best they can for the entire populous of American society. While they do recognize their cultural and ethnic differences, and they maintain an intentional connection to their heritage and personal missions, they also seek to exploit those ethnic and cultural differences as a means to contribute to the richness and complexity of American society as a whole.

In all, these aspirations do not stray at all from the professed goals of every community college leader or advocate; which I believe has contributed to their success, longevity, and popularity. However, this hypothesis does not seek to deracialize each leader, but instead it is intended to suggest that they belong to a cadre of advocates of all ethnicities who view themselves as leaders in higher education with multiple identities, rather than leaders who define themselves solely by their ethnicity.

**(2) How do African-American administrators balance their public personas and their personal perceptions of race when attempting to execute the duties required by their positions?**

African-American administrators balance their public personas with the personal perceptions of race by not completely separating the two. Once again, the collective identity of African-Americans is a complex matrix of personal arenas/personas, and public arenas/personas, and despite what some may believe, all of these components make up each participant's identity. Therefore, I would assert that it would be impossible to bisect the personal from the private as DuBois attempted to do when theorizing the psychic-duality or "double consciousness". Modern day African-Americans are much more complex than that. All of the participants embraced the ability to navigate between and through the two realities, without the stressors that Dubois observed, while executing their responsibilities quite effectively in their view.

Could this then mean that DuBois was inaccurate in his assessment being an African-American in the nation defined by Eurocentric Whites? No, in fact what I interpret through my interviews and observations was the mastery of fluid movement of these college executive administrators between what is defined as being the "White" dominant culture and the subcultural expectations of what is defined as "Black". Dubois was correct when he identified a compelling need for African-Americans to wear the two masks of identity, but these participants have become so proficient at balancing the two personas that they no longer experience the stress or contempt that he associated with it. This is truly a talent for

these leaders to masterfully articulate and present different authentic personas according to the cultural or environmental demand.

As some may point out, this shifting is required of every person as they perpetually move from the professional world to the private. Yet I assert that none have asked that basic cultural identifiers such as language, apparel, and traditional customs been shelved more often than ethnic minorities. Furthermore, I believe that no ethnic minority has been asked to mute or ignore these cultural identifiers more often and by more people than African-Americans.

Granted, I am writing from the perspective of an African-American and this may present some of my biases, but unlike some other ethnic minorities, it is extremely difficult to ignore the physical identifiers of African-American skin tone, the texture of African-American hair, and the structure of African-American bodies. It is even more difficult and challenging to ignore the psychological baggage of cultural conflicts African-Americans have been forced to carry for centuries. This baggage of legalized segregation, poverty, murder, and a myriad of other forms of victimhood, has weighed on the conscious of most Americans, and placed African-Americans in the direct firing line of criticism for not conforming to the Eurocentric ideals we often accept under the guise American culture. So when there is an examination of cultural navigation by a traditionally marginalized people such as this study, and it becomes obvious that seven African-American individuals can continue to be defined as successful in their careers previously dominated by Whites, while simultaneously acknowledging the aforementioned identifiers and baggage, I view their actions as our simply moving toward the dream pluralism and diversity.

**(3) How does race and ethnicity contribute to the decision-making and policy-development that are created and enforced by African-American administrators in the community college?**

Race and ethnicity play a regular role in the decisions and policies that are created and enforced by my participants. It is because of their ethnic identity of being African-American that has contributed to a great deal of continued success. Just as their geographic roots are part of how they approach the responsibilities of their positions, being African-American is inextricably attached to their leadership styles; their approaches to pedagogy; and the expectations of their superiors, peers, and subordinates. This acknowledgement of their ethnic and cultural identities is also manifested in their professional research, community involvement, and their memberships to various leadership development organizations. They are all wholly dedicated to remain connected to their ethnic identities regardless of circumstance.

Yet despite their individual success, all but one participant could readily identify at least one occasion when their ethnic identity as an African-American was met with bigoted opposition. So this study does not claim complete autonomy for any of its participants; however, I do recognize that agendas, visions, goal setting, and strategic planning are all in some way driven by each leader's personal view of society's needs and how each college can address those needs.

### **Limitations and Strengths of the Study**

Although every attempt has been made to provide a well-rounded study of reflexive practices and observations of African-American executive administrators, there are some

limitations to the study that may have hindered the accuracy or slowed some of the interpretive process in its completion. This study does stand as a purposeful retelling of one specific culture, yet as I compiled the data, I understood that I was considered an outsider by some of the Roundtable members. Although the convener Dr. Helen Benjamin invited me to several meetings, retreats, and private affairs, because of the small number of young African-American community college presidents, it was apparent that I was not a member. This did not cause discomfort, but because of the sensitive nature of the study, I believe that some members avoided speaking with me on issues concerning their career or even ignored my invitation to the study.

I do not suggest however that I felt like an interloper. In fact, because I was embraced by the very popular and influential convener, Dr. Helen Benjamin, I was treated warmly and often greeted with the same hugs that most of the members received. It was a strength of the study that I invited those participants whom I believed really wanted to offer their honest and open opinions.

Another limitation of the study stems from the very nature of ethnomethodology and its dependence on personal reflection and storytelling. Because it teeters on the participant themselves, I had very few options to triangulate the responses or self perceptions of the participants. If I framed the study in a different methodology, more specifically a autoethnography or a case study, I could have selected fewer participants, but also triangulated the data through ancillary interviews of co-workers or subordinates, observations during staff or board meetings, or document analyses of memos or emails.

Despite my narrow opportunity to triangulate my data, I do however recognize that the sheer number and geographic locations of my participants and sites represented a wide

cross-section of the United States and provided me with more data than I could ever think to use in this study. By personally visiting these sites and executives in their own offices, I believe that dynamic alone provided a more intimate and comfortable environment for the participant; thereby allowing them to be as honest and forthcoming as possible.

### **Implications of the Study**

The implications of this ethnographic research study are vast and far-reaching. Primarily this study initiates a very relevant and pertinent conversation on the evolution of African-American administrators in the community college. Though there have been several aforementioned studies that sought to interpret the competencies and leadership skills of men, women, various ethnic minorities, and generational leaders, this study provides a foundational insight on contemporary African-American identity that has yet to be explored from a longitudinal perspective. This is not to suggest that the study was on-going, but instead it explored a seminal artifact that contextualized African-American culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and compared its relevance to the post-modern society of American inclusion and diversity. This is far-reaching for any researcher continuing a phenomenological study in educational leadership, a New Historicism critique in the academic discipline of English literature, or the scientific research of etiological stressors in psychology, chemistry, or biology. This study produces various opportunities to continue and expand research on identity, race, and privilege that permeates every facet of scientific or academic inquiry.



Yet what I believe is most impressive about the implications of researching the identity and coping mechanisms that ethnic minorities utilize in American society, is the fact that it offers an opportunity to continue the dialogue on a traditionally taboo subject that a segment of our population chooses to ignore, deny, or support. Those who wish to turn their backs on the legitimacy of people who may appear different, or cultures that may present themselves as foreign and frightening, are now afforded yet another artifact to promote the richness of pluralism and diversity in a nation that was spawned on such tropes of freedom. This dynamic is afforded to both ethnic minorities as well as Whites; thereby creating a springboard for more intense and direct dialogues.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

When I first endeavored to begin study that attempted to link the philosophical/historical literature of African-American history with the practical theories of education and sociology, I was shocked to watch complexities of social research mushroom into inquiries that I had never imagined. I admit that at times I was overwhelmed with the data, the travel, and the literature. Yet as I attempted to narrow my focus in the reflexive nature of ethnomethodology, the amount of work did not decrease, but I began to understand that I did not have to do it all in order to understand how people cope with potentially stressful situations. So therefore I offer this study to those readers who would see it as a spring board to other research that attempts to decode the uber-complex subject of African-American identity.

As a means to complement this study in racial identity, I suggest that an inquiry along lines of gender be undertaken. As I observed the members of the Presidents' Roundtable who

were in attendance during a fall retreat, one executive board meeting, two general assembly meetings, and three social events, I noticed quite quickly that some of the older male members would attempt to dominate conversations and sometimes dismissing the opinions of their female counterparts. In addition, I observed on several occasions when a female member of the Roundtable would make an assertion and one of the male members would disagree with it, re-contextualize it, and then offer the same idea again, minutes later. The phenomenon warrants further investigation as researchers fill the void of subcultural studies and gender relations.

### **Personal Reflection**

The African-American executive administrators of the community college are very unique individuals when compared to their White counterparts. Though this study does not attempt to discover or interpret the professional dealings of the White executive administrator, I will insist that the historical context that some African-Americans and some White Americans have shared, fosters a unique professional relationship when the effectiveness, mobility, familial and social relationships are examined and compared between the two groups. When I first initiated this ethnomethodological study, I was extremely excited and very anxious to uncover some ground-breaking evolution that has taken place in the African-American professional community as we continue to navigate through the White-dominated arena of higher education. Though initially disappointed in my findings that very little of the earth-shattering kinds of changes have really occurred, as I began to think about the interviews, observations, and personal encounters with these participants and others, my perspective began to change.

My personal desire for a more collectively diverse community college seems to be slow to flourish, yet the recognition of the subtle changes that African-Americans have adapted to began to uplift my spirits to a point of hope and encouragement. Though the Black literature of the American tradition continues to tell the stories of the disenfranchised, muted, and ignored, such fundamental philosophies as those from DuBois, Garvey, and Washington establish the barometer for social progression of African-Americans.

After reviewing the data from this study, I am confident in asserting that DuBois' theory that African-American duality absolutely has merit even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although there have been significant changes in which components of White culture African-Americans have adopted, there still remains an unconscious privileging of White culture that Blacks still use as a standard of what is acceptable and what is not. Though such privileging has somewhat diminished, and some of the aspects and characteristics of what was once considered White are now simply a part of being American, the pattern of the subconscious denial of expressions or actions of others based on a racial perspective is in fact a denial of one's own self.

I do not suggest however that every facet of DuBoisian psychic duality has been incorporated in everyday life of these African-American administrators. In fact, I agree with Drs. Peterson, Brown, and Franks that the ability to code switch has become so acculturated that it can now be viewed as a talent and often an unrecognized attribute. For to exist without the ability to code switch would mean that the administrator has severely handicapped themselves in an attempt to remain purveyors of education to a diverse populous. To remain culturally monolingual in a world that has become multilingual, will

certainly lead to limited resources, slow development, narrow vision, and a diminishing educated population.

Martin Luther King once wrote that “we cannot afford to live with the narrow, provincial outside agitator idea” of separatism (King 1963). This is true here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Just as we cannot allow our White executive administrators to live in the world which only privileges White culture, we also cannot allow ourselves to exist and function in the silo of Blackness or otherwise. In fact, to live in the public arena, only recognizing one population of people, whether it is alongside the lines of ethnicity, sexuality, geographic location or economic stature, can dangerously stunt the growth of our nation, as well as our selves.

I am also aware that even within this small group of participants there are some who harbor a belief that a fallacious exterior, one which subordinates African-American diversity, is needed and demanded by the White cultural mainstream, and therefore should be embraced despite their assertions within the study. In fact, I have to divulge that in a conversation with one of my participants outside of the scope of this study, it was suggested to me that in order to move into a leadership position, I must consider changing my persona to mirror those of most Black men in the South. So as I sing the praises of progress among some of the community colleges, I also moan the stagnation of those who still find it necessary ignore the diversity within the subculture of African-Americans themselves.

For what has occurred throughout the assimilatory acculturation of African-Americans thus far, is that they have attempted to remove the component of stress from the theory from psychic duality. From the study, it can be assumed that the participants no longer feel the stress or pressure of attempting to fit in; that they no longer feel as they have to

compromise their personal identities in order to navigate successfully in their positions as executive administrators of community colleges or even private citizens. Though this may stem from the very fact of their positions themselves i.e. they set the tones of the institutions, I believe that it stems from their perceptions that they have nothing to hide; the shameful veil of historical oppression has been lifted. This has manifested itself through their use of language, personal artifacts on display, or their articulated vision for diversity and pluralism. The amazing part of this finding is that sometimes they did not readily recognize the switching when it occurs because it is now part of both their private and public personas. In fact, I remind the reader that Dr. Peterson admitted that she believes those African-Americans who cannot code switch are missing a vital "tool in their toolbox."

If what Cornell West states is true: that the notion of identity has to deal with the idea of protection, association, and recognition. Furthermore asserting that people identify themselves in certain ways in order to protect their bodies, their labor, communities, and their way of life. (West, Klor De Alva, & Shorris, 1998) Then I have to ask, what are these liberated executive administrators protecting in their modern dual identities of Sista Girl, or their unwillingness to combat narrow-minded members of a culture who do not welcome diversity? Are they protecting the virtue of a subculture that finds itself still on the fringes of society rather than fully incorporated as a legitimate part of America? Or lastly, is it a means for self-preservation and promotion within a system in order to gradually change it for the next generation? I am still not sure, but I do admit that these seven brave participants are quite inspirational in their quest to promote diversity in the community college that remains overwhelmingly White when compared to the clients that it serves.

They should be commended for their hard work and determination during their transitions from very meek and humble beginnings to the internationally recognized influences that they have become in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Though I have studied these heroes of the contemporary community college individually, I find that collectively they have contributed to the progression, acceptance, and visibility of the descendants of our darker-skinned American forefathers; those who found it necessary to don the mask of a culture that in some respects still remains antithetical their existence and full authentic inclusion.

Note:

After completing the first round of in-person interviews, Dr. Johnson accepted a position as a District Chancellor with a different system, Dr. Peterson accepted a position as President of a different multi-campus institute, and Dr. Scotts accepted a position as Campus President of the same multi-campus college. He is presently employed in a dual position as Campus President and Interim Campus President of his former campus. Because I was not able to visit their new sites, I have only included my observations of the surroundings from our first interview.

## **APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INVITATION**

May 23, 2010

Dr. Joseph Smith  
Rainbow Community College  
777 Munchkin Lane  
Somewhere, OZ 99999

Dear Dr. Smith,

My name is Albert Farr and I am an English Instructor with St. Petersburg College as well as a student completing my doctoral degree in Higher Education and Leadership Policy Studies at Iowa State University. As a requirement of graduation, I will complete a dissertation in my discipline and research interests in diversity; specifically, understanding and interpreting the experiences of African-American executive administrators. Because of our previous correspondence or your reputation in higher education, you have been identified as one who may be willing to voluntarily take part in this study.

As a means for gathering data for my dissertation, your contribution will be limited to two brief interviews, no longer than 40-60 minutes, and one observation by me, on the date of your choice. During each interview you will be asked a series of questions that will inquire about your experiences involving and resulting from your position as an African-American executive administrator. To make the interviews as convenient and less intrusive as possible, I will conduct each face-to-face interview during times in June

and/or July that you select. I have also included an informed consent document for you to review as it describes the purpose and methodology of my research.

Though your input and experiences are certainly welcomed, encouraged, and kept confidential, your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you are interested in assisting with this research study, please accept this invitation by responding by email or using the self-addressed stamped envelope.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Albert Farr  
7500 118<sup>th</sup> Terrace  
Largo, Fl 33773  
farr.albert@spcollege.edu

## **APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT**

**CONSENT FORM FOR:** Real diversity or just another mask? An Ethnomethodological study of authentic ethnicity of African-American community college administrators

This form describes a research project. It has information to help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. Research studies include only people who choose to take part—your participation is completely voluntary. Please discuss any questions you have about the study or about this form with the project staff before deciding to participate.

### **Who is conducting this study?**

This study is being conducted by Albert D. Farr

### **Why am I invited to participate in this study?**

You are being asked to take part in this study because you have been identified as an executive administrator with a community college. Because your experiences can be considered as unique, you are viewed as person who could contribute a rich descriptive



narrative. You should not participate if you do not self identify as being African-American.

### **What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to acknowledge, interpret and develop an understanding of the assimilatory strategies that some African-American community college administrators adopt and to investigate the extent to which they use these strategies in order to maintain a connection to the cultural mainstream of an institution, foster respect and secure continued employment.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions during two (2) interview sessions. Depending on your geographic location, your first interview will either be conducted during a telephone conversation or a face-to-face interview. In either case, the first interview will last at least 30 minutes, but no longer than 45 minutes. The interview will consist of open-ended questions which inquire of your lived experiences as an African-American administrator in education and your views on diversity, racism, and institutional culture.

You will also be interviewed a second time approximately 3-4 weeks later. During this interview, you will be asked a series of follow-up questions from the first interview as well as newly developed questions. All the questions will inquire of your experiences as an African-American executive administrator with a community college. During both interview sessions, the conversation will be digitally recorded in a secure and password protected device.

As one last activity, you will also be asked to allow the primary investigator, Albert Farr, to observe your activities in either a meeting or any other daily operational activity for a minimum of one hour.

After all the data has been collected and analyzed, you will be asked to review the major themes for any errors or misinterpretations.

Your participation will last for two interview sessions of no more than 2 hours total; one observation of at least one hour, and a review of collected data.

### **What are the possible risks and benefits of my participation?**

Risks – The risks or discomfort involved with the study may involve potential emotional discomfort associated with recalling or narrating previously lived experiences. This may involve embarrassment, disappointment, anger, pride or even elation. There are also risks that may involve professional or career status should your institution be identified in the study.

Because of the possibility of shared detailed information of the interview that may inadvertently disclose the identity of the participant or the institution of which the participant is employed, and to help insure that the participants as well as their institution remain confidential, only pseudonyms will be used to identify both the participant and the institution. Also to minimize possible retribution from the participant's employer, each participant will be allowed to review each interview transcript to either omit or clarify position should details of the interviews become identifiers.

Benefits – You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study. We hope that this research will benefit society by conducting this qualitative inquiry of racial and

cultural actions in post-secondary institutions, more insightful and rich narratives can contribute to the body of literature that seeks to understand the peculiar institution of subliminal oppression that occurs between the dominate White culture and within the traditionally disenfranchised African-American subculture in academia. This study will assist administrators in recognizing and identifying some of the obstacles that some African-Americans may encounter when attempting to be considered as a contributing segment of the governing body of an institution. This will lead to an acceptance of ideas and strategies that may contribute to or contradict traditional thought, thereby reconstructing an institutional culture that encourages the growth of a truly diverse population of administrators, faculty, staff and students.

### **How will the information I provide be used?**

The information you provide will be used for the following purposes: This will be used for the completion of a doctoral dissertation and any subsequent publications or presentations which stem from that dissertation. No one other than the primary investigator, Albert Farr, will have access to the raw data.

### **What measures will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data or to protect my privacy?**

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable laws and regulations. Records will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the ISU Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies with human subjects) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: participants will be issued a pseudonym or alternate name in lieu of their actual names. No other identifiers will be used. The data will be initially collected using a digital recording device that will be secured in a locked drawer and subsequently

erased after transcription. The transcribed data will be secured on a private, password protected computer and will be retained for one year from this date, after which it will be erased. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential as the pseudonym will remain in place of your actual name. This confidentiality will be maintained throughout study as well as in subsequent printing, publishing or oral narration of this study.

There is a risk that any detailed information that you share during this study may inadvertently disclose not only your identity, but also the identity of the institution of which you describe. Because this risk, you will be allowed to review the transcripts of the interviews to omit, edit or clarify any story that you share.

**Will I incur any costs from participating or will I be compensated?**

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**What are my rights as a human research participant?**

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

**Whom can I call if I have questions or problems?**

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact: Albert Farr at 727-366-4372 or Dr. Larry Ebbers at 515-294-8067.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

**Consent and Authorization Provisions**

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**Investigator Statement**

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person Obtaining Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Interview Questions

1. Please describe your position with the college and your basic responsibilities.
2. How do you identify your ethnicity?
3. Please explain your track to the current position you are in.
4. During your rise to an executive administrator, how would you describe your experiences as an African-American community college leader or potential leader?
5. How have those experiences shaped your leadership style?
6. Considering the culture of all the institutions you been a contributing member, how have you seen your ethnicity play a role in your responsibilities or what you have accomplished?
7. What were your most proud accomplishments during your rise to this position?
8. Do you believe that you have encountered covert or overt racism during your career?
9. How would you respond to someone who insists that racism is dead especially considering your present leadership position?
10. Do you feel that your board expects you to contribute to the culture or redefine it?
11. How do you feel your ethnicity contributes to the decisions that you make?
12. In what ways do you express your culture or ethnicity in your daily operations?
13. The AACC has reported that there is a need for ethnic diversity in executive administrators in the community college. How do you respond to that claim?
14. Do you feel that you are expected to wear different masks in your different arenas?
15. Can you identify some of the stressors in your position?
16. Please identify the stressors that may stem from your ethnicity.
17. As an African-American, are you expected to act a certain way when addressing homogenous audiences?
18. How do you feel African-Americans can contribute to the diversity of your institution?
19. How do you account for the majority of African-American administrators being placed in student services rather than administrative or academic services?
20. Please describe how your leadership style reflects your authentic self.
21. How do you and your institution embrace and support ethnic diversity in the staff?
22. Can you recall a time when you were a victim of blatant racism in the workforce? If so, how did you respond to it?
23. How do you interact with the African-American students, faculty and staff? Do you feel a need to interact with them differently?
24. Do you think African-American subordinates approach you differently because you are African-American? How about Whites?
25. Can you recall an event when a superior reacted to you differently because you are African-American?
26. How have you balanced your ethnicity and personal life with the culture of the institution?

## REFERENCES

- Akbar, N. (1984). *Chains and images of psychological slavery*. New York : New Mind Productions.
- Allen, B. J. (2004). "Diversity" and Organizational Communication. In R. J. II (Ed.), *African-American communication and identities* (pp. 211-218). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Anderson, W. J., Frierson, H., & Lewis, T. (1979). Black survival in White academe. *The Journal of Negro Education* , 48 (1), 92-102.
- American Association of Community Colleges. (2005). *Competencies for community college leaders*. Washington, D.C.
- American Association of Community Colleges. (n.d.). *Staff Employment Distribution*. Retrieved October 11, 2011, from American Association of Community Colleges:<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Trends/Pages/staffemploymentdistribution.aspx>
- Asante, M. (1980). *Afrocentricity*. New York : Amulefi Publishing Company.
- Astin, A. (1996a). "Involvement in learning" revisited: Lessons we have learned. *Journal of College Student Development* (37), 123-134.
- Astin, A. (1993c). What matters in college? Four critical years revisited.
- Astin, A. (1991). *Assessment for excellence*. New York : Macmillan.
- Astin, A. (1993). Diversity and Multiculturalism on campus: How are students affected? *Change* , 25 (2), 44-49.
- Bailey, T. (2002). The evolving community college: The multiple mission debate. In N. Thomas, A. Lorenzo, & M. Milliron (Ed.), *Perspectives on the Community*



- College*. Phoenix: League for Innovation in the Community College .
- Bell, D. (1987). *And we are not saved: The elusive quest for racial justice*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bell, D. (1980). Brown V. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma. *Harvard Law Review* , 93 (3), 518-533.
- Benjamin, H., Dukes, C., Gnage, M., & Scott-Skillman, T. (2010). Black women community college CEOs in the 21st century. *American Association of Community Colleges Annual Convention*. Seattle.
- Bernal, D. D., & Villalpando, O. (2002). An apartheid of knowledge in academia: The struggle over the "legitimate" knowledge of faculty of color. *Equity & Excellence in Education* , 35 (2), 169-180.
- Blau, J. (1999). Two-year college transfer rates of Black American students. *Community Journal of Research and Practice* , 23 (5), 525-531.
- Blackwell, J. (1989). Mentoring: An action strategy for increasing minority faculty. *Academe* , 75 (5), 8-14.
- Blom, J.-P., & Gumperz, J. (1972). Social meaning in linguistic structure. (J. Gumperz, & D. Hymes, Eds.) *Directions in Sociolinguistics*, 407-434.
- Bower, B. L. (1996). The social power of African-American female administrators in the community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* (20), 243-251.
- Boggs, G. (2003). Leadership Context for the Twenty First Century. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2003 (123), 15-25.
- Bryman, A., & Teevan, J. (2002, March). *Interviewing in Qualitative Research*.

- Retrieved August 24, 2007, from Oxford University Press:  
<http://fds.oup.com/www.ou.co.uk/pdf/0-19-874204-5chap15.pdf>
- Brint, S., & Karabel, J. (1989). *Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promises of Educational Opportunity in America 1900-1985*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Brint, S., & Karabel, J. (1991). Institutional origins and transformations: The case of the American community colleges. In W. Powell, & P. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism* (pp. 337-360). Chicago : The Univeristy of Chicago Press.
- Brown, T. (2003). Critical Race Theory speaks to the sociology of mental health: Mental health problems produced by racial stratification. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* , 44 (3), 292-301.
- Bronstein, P. (1993). Challenges, rewards, and costs for feminists and ethnic minority scholars. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* (53), 61-70.
- Cabrera, A., Nora, A., Terenzini, P., Pascarella, E., & Hagedorn, L. (1999). Campus racial climate and the adjustmetn of students to college: A comparison of White students and African-American students. *Journal of Higher Education* , 70 (2).
- Caldwell, L. D., & Stewart, J. B. (2001). Rethinking W.E.B. Dubois' "Double Consciousness". In L. Jones (Ed.), *Retaining African-Americans In Higher Education* (pp. 225-234). VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Chang, M. (2001). The positive educational effects of racial diversityon campus. In G. Orfield (Ed.), *Diversity challenged: Evidence on the impact of affirmative action* (pp. 175-186). Cambridge: Harvard Education Publishing Group.
- Cohen, A., & Brawer, F. (2008). *The American Community College* (5th Edition ed.). San

- Francisco: Josey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd Edition ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Cross, W. J. (1991). *Shades of Black: Diversity in African-American identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Cross, W. J. (1971). The Negro to Black conversion experience: Toward a psychology of Black liberation. *Black World* , 20, pp. 13-27.
- Cross, W. J. (1995). The psychology of Nigrescence: Revising the Cross model. In J. Ponterotto, J. Casa, L. Suzuki, & C. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cross, W. J., & Fhagen-Smith, P. (2001). Patterns of African-American identity development. In C. L. Wijeyasinghe, & B. W. Jackson (Eds.), *New Perspectives on Racial Identity* (pp. 243-270). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Crotty, M. (2005). *The foundations of social research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Evans, C. (1971). What happens to Black administrators in White universities. *Negro American Literature Forum*, 5 (3), 98-99+101.
- Education, A. C. (1996). *Educating for the global community: A Framework for community colleges*. Des Plaines, IL : Author.
- Esterberg, K. (2002). *Qualitative methods in social research*. Boston : McGraw-Hill.
- DuBois, W. (1903). *W.E.B. DuBois "The Talented Tenth"*. Retrieved June 14, 2010, from The Gilder Lehrman Center for the study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition: <http://www.yale.edu/glc/archive/1148.htm>

- DuBois, W. (1999). *The souls of Black folk*. New York: Norton Publishing.
- Dyson, M. E. (2006). Does George W. Bush care about Black people? In *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster* (pp. 16-33). New York, New York: Basic Civitas Books.
- Davis, J. (2000). *The White image in Black mind*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Delgado, R. (1999). Affirmative action as a majoritarian device: Or, do you really want to be a role model? In R. Delgado, & J. Stephancic (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge* (2nd ed., pp. 397-403). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Delgado, R. (1995). *Critical Race Theory: The cutting edge*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Delgado, R. (1998). Storytelling for oppositionists and others. In R. Delgado, & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *A critical reader: The Latino condition* (pp. 259-270). New York: New York University Press.
- Delgado, R., & Stephancic, J. (2001). *Critical Race Theory*. New York: New York University Press.
- Delgado, R., & Stephancic, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge* (2nd Edition ed.). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Dellow, D. A. (2002). Why do community colleges need to be involved in international activities. In *Internationalizing the Community College* (pp. 1-12). Washington D.C.: Community College Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd Edition ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage .
- Dixon, D., & Rousseau, C. (2005). And we are still not saved: Critical Race Theory in

- education ten years later. *Race and Ethnicity and Education* , 8 (1), 7-27.
- Dougherty, K. (1992). Community colleges and baccalaureate attainment. *The Journal of Higher Education* , 63 (2), 188-214.
- Dougherty, K. (1991). The community college at the crossroads: The need for structural reform. *Harvard Educational Review* , 61 (3), 311-336.
- Douglass, F. (1998). The Progress of the cause: An address delivered in Norristown, PA . In G. Lampe, *Frederick Douglass: Freedom's Voice 1818-1845*. East Lansing , MI: Michigan State University Press .
- Fujimoto, J. (1999). The Los Angeles community college: Pathways to urban change. (107), 55-66.
- Furnas, J. (1956). *Goodbye to Uncle Tom*. New York, New York: William Sloane Associates.
- Favor, J. M. (1999). *Authentic Blackness: The Folk in New Negro Renaissance*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Floyd, D. (2006). Achieving the baccalaureate through the community college. *New Directions for Community Colleges* (135), 59-72.
- Guinier, L., & Torres, G. (2002). *The miner's canary*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gurin, P. (1999). *Expert report of Patricia Gurin: Gratz et al., v. Bollinger et al., No. 97-75321 (E.D. Mich.), Grutter et al. v. Bollinger et al., No. 97-75928 (E.D. Mich.)*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from The compelling need for diversity in higher education.: <http://www.umich.edu/~urel/admissions/legal/expert/gurintoc.html>

- Gurin, P., Dey, E., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72 (3), 330-366.
- Garvey, M. (1969). Philosophy and opinions. In W. L. Katz (Ed.). New York: Arno Press and The New York Times.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Giles, H., Bourhis, R., & Taylor, D. (1977). Towards a theory of language in ethnic group relations. In H. Giles, & R. St. Clair (Eds.), *Language, ethnicity and intergroup relations* (pp. 307-348). London: Academic Press.
- Gillat-Karem, R. (1991). *Underrepresentation and the question of diversity: Women and minorities in the community college*. Washington D.C.: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.
- Gordon, J. (1997). A critical interpretation of policies for minority students in Washington State. *NACADA Journal*, 17 (1), 15-21.
- Green, V. (2008). Reflections from one community college leader. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 32 (10), 812-821.
- Grier, W., & Cobbs, P. (1968). *Black rage*. New York : Basic Books.
- Habermas, J. (1972). *Knowledge and human interests*. Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Handel, W. (1982). *Ethnomethodology: How People Make Sense*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Harris, C. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, as cited in Ladsen-Billings, G. & Tate, (1995) Toward a critical race theory of education. Teachers

- College Record 97(1).
- Harriss, K. (1989). New Alliances: Socialist-Feminism in the eighties. *Feminist Review* (31), 34-54.
- Heap, J. L. (1980). Description in ethnomethodology. *Human Studies* , 3 (1), 87-106.
- Hecht, M. I., Ribeau, S., & Alberts, J. K. (2004). An Afro-American Perspective on Interethnic Communication. In R. J. III (Ed.), *African-American Communication and Identities* (pp. 105-123). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Held, D. (1980). *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Helms, J. (1994). The conceptualization of ethnic identity and other 'racial' constructs. In E. Thickett, R. Watts, & D. Birman (Eds.), *Human Diversity: Perspectives on People in Context*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hockaday, J., & Puryear, D. E. (2000). Community college leadership in the new millennium. *New Expeditions Issues Paper Series* (8).
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (2005). Interpretive practice and social action. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd Edition ed., pp. 483-505). Thousand Oaks, San Francisco: Sage Publications.
- hooks, b. (1993). *Sisters of the yam*. Cambridge: Southend Press.
- Horkheimer, M., & O'Connell, M. J. (1982). *Critical Theory: Selected essays*. (M. O'Connell, Trans.) Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Jackson, J. F. (2001). A new test for diversity. In L. Jones (Ed.), *Retaining African Americans in Higher Education* (pp. 93-109). VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Jackson, J. (2006). Hiring practices of African-American males in academic leadership

- positions at American colleges and universities: An employment trends and disparate impact analysis. *Teachers College Record* , 108 (2), 316-338.
- Jackson, J., & Phelps, L. A. (2004). Diversity in the Two-Year College Academic Workforce. *New Directions for Community Colleges* , 2004 (127), 79-88.
- Jones, L. (2000). *Brothers of the academy: Up and coming black scholars earning our way in higher education*. Sterling, VA.: Stylus.
- King, M.L. (1963). "Letter from Birmingham Jail". *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. Henry Gates Jr. Ed. New York: Norton Publishing.
- Kuh, G. (1995). The other curriculum: Out-of-class experiences associated with student learning and personal development. *Journal of Higher Education* (66), 123-155.
- Kunjufu, J. (2002). *Black students: Middle-class teachers*. Chicago: African-American Images.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Inter Views: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing.
- Kezar, A., & Lester, J. (2008). Leadership in a world of divided feminism. *NASPA journal about women in higher education*, 1 (1), 49-73.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97 (1), 47-68.
- Lewis, C., & Middleton, V. (2003). African-Americans in community colleges: A review of research reported in the Community College Journal of Research and Practice 1990-2000. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* , 27, 787-797.
- Levin, J. (2000). The revised institution: The community college mission at the end of twentieth century. *The Community College Review* , 28 (2).



- Leiter, K. (1980). *A Primer on Ethnomethodology*. New Jersey: Oxford University Press.
- Lincoln, A. (1909). *The Negro Problem: Abraham Lincoln's Solution*. (W. P. Pickett, Ed.) New York: The Knickerbocker Press.
- Lorde, A. (2009). There is no hierarchy of oppression. In R. P. Byrd, J. B. Cole, & B. Guy-Sheftall (Eds.), *I Am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audre Lorde* (p. 219). Oxford University Press.
- Maxwell, W., Hagedorn, L. S., Cypers, S., Moon, H. S., Brocato, P., Wahl, K., et al. (2003). Community and diversity in urban community colleges: Coursetaking among entering students. *Community College Review*, 30 (21), 21-45.
- Maxwell, J. (2005). *Qualitative Research Design* (2nd Edition ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Maynard, M. (1994). Methods, practice and epistemology: The debate about feminism and research. In M. Maynard, & J. Purvis (Eds.), *Researching Womens' Lives from a Feminist Perspective* (pp. 10-26). London: Taylor and Francis.
- MacIsaac, D. (2002, September 7). *The critical theory of Jurgen Habermas*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from Buffalo State University : <http://physicsed.buffalostate.edu/danowner/habcritthy.html>
- Mannheim, K. (1964). On the interpretation of Weltanschauung. In K. Mannheim (Ed.), *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (P. Kecskemeti, Trans., pp. 33-83). London, England: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Mason, H. (1998). A persistence model for African-American male urban community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 22 (8), 751-761.

- McWhorter, J. (2004). *Authentically Black*. New York : Gotham Books.
- McWhorter, J. (2000). *Losing the Race*. New York: The Free Press.
- McNairy, F. (1996). The challenge for higher education: Retaining students of color.  
(I. Johnson, & A. Ottens, Eds.) *New directions for student services: No 74*.  
*Leveling the playing field: Promoting academic success for students of color*, 3-13.
- Merriam, S. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Miller, J. (1990). Minority student achievement: A comprehensive perspective. *Journal of Developmental Education* , 13 (3), 6-11.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ogbu, J. (1987). Variability in minority school performance: A problem in search of an explanation. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* , 18 (4), 312-334.
- Opp, R. (2002). Enhancing program completion rates among two-year college students of color. *Community college journal of research and practice* , 26 (2), 147-163.
- Opp, R. (2001). Enhancing recruitment success for two-year college students of color. *Community college journal of research and practice* , 25 (2), 71-86.
- Opp, R., & Smith, A. (1994). Effective strategies for enhancing minority faculty recruitment and retention. *New Directions for Community Colleges* , 1994 (87), 43-55.
- Opp, R., & Smith, A. (1996). Minority faculty recruitment programs at two-year colleges.  
In C. S. Turner, M. Garcia, N. Amaury, & L. Rendon (Eds.), *Racial & Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education*. ASHE Reader Series. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Pallas, A. (2001). Preparing education doctoral students for epistemological diversity.

- Educational Researcher* , 30, 6-11.
- Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students* (Vol. II). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Pascarella, E., Edison, M., Nora, A., Haggard, L. S., & Terenzini, P. (1996). Influences on students' openness to diversity and challenge in the first year of college. *Journal of Higher Education* , 67 (2), 174-195.
- Patton, L. D., McEwen, M., Rendon, L., & Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (2007). Critical race perspectives on theory in student affairs. *New Directions for Student Services* (120), 39-53.
- Patton, M. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Phelps, D., Sullivan-Taber, L., & Smith, C. (1997). African-American community college presidents. *Community College Review* , 24 (4), 3-26.
- Phillips, K., & Gonzalez Sullivan, L. (2005). *National Profile of Community Colleges: Trends and Statistics*. American Association of Community Colleges. Washington, D.C.: Community College Press.
- Sutherland, M. (1990). Black faculty in white academia: The fit is an uneasy one. *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, 14 (1), 17-23.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Sciences, Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and Social*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sellers, R. M., Smith, M. S., Shelton, J. N., Rowley, S. A., & Chavous, T. M. (1998). Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity: A reconceptualization of African

- American racial identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* , 2 (1), 18-39.
- Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., van Laar, C., & Levin, S. (2004). Social Dominance Theory: Its agenda and method. *Political Psychology* , 25 (6), 845-880.
- Shults, C. (2001). *The critical impact of impending retirements on community college leadership* . Washington D.C. : American Association of Community Colleges.
- Shults, C. (2002). *The critical impact of impending retirements on community college leadership*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community Colleges.
- Slay, H. (2003). Spanning two worlds: Social identity and emergent African-American Leaders. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies* , 9 (4), 56-66.
- Smedley, B., Myers, H., & Harrell, S. (1993). Minority stresses and the college adjustment of ethnic minority freshman. *Journal of Higher Education*, 64 (4), 434.
- Smiley, T. (2006). *The Covenant with Black America* . Chicago : Third World Press.
- Smith, E., & Witt, S. (1993). A comparative study of occupational stress among African American and White university faculty: A research note. *Research in Higher Education* , 34 (2), 229-241.
- Smith, J. (1993). *After the demise of empiricism: The problem of judging social and educational inquiry*. Norwoods, NJ: Ablex.
- Stubbes, A. (2008). *The community college presidency in the new millennium: Gender differences in leadership preparation*. Doctoral dissertation. Ames: Iowa State University.
- Rubin, S. (2001, Summer). *Rural colleges as catalysts for community change*. Retrieved July

- 10, 2007, from United States Department of Agriculture:  
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ruralamerica/ra162/ra162d.pdf>
- Reyes, N. (1997). Holding on to what they've got: A look at programs designed to keep college students in college. *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 36-41.
- Rendon, L. (1995, March 1). *Facilitating retention and transfer for first generation students in community colleges*. Retrieved June 15, 2007, from  
[http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content\\_storage\\_01/00000000b/80/26/a2/94.pdf](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/00000000b/80/26/a2/94.pdf)
- Roueche, J., Roueche, S., & Johnson, R. (2002). At our best: Facing the challenges. *Community College Journal*, 76 (5).
- Rodriguez, R. (1982). *Hunger of memory*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Rolle, K., Davies, T., & Banning, J. (2000). African-American administrators' experiences in predominately white colleges and universities. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 24 (2), 79-94.
- Ross, M., M.F., & Henderson, C. (1993). *American college president: 1993 edition*. American Council on Education, Washington D.C.
- Turner, C. S., Myers, S. L., & Creswell, J. W. (1999). Exploring underrepresentation. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 70 (1), 27-59.
- Turner, C. S., Myers, S., & Creswell, J. (1999). Exploring Underrepresentation: The case of faculty of color in the Midwest. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 70 (1), 27-59.
- Taylor, E. (1998). A primer on Critical Race Theory. *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (19), 122-124.

- Tillman, L. (2002). Culturally sensitive research associates: An African-American perspective. *Educational Researcher* , 31 (9), 3-12.
- Thaxter, L., & Steven, G. (1999). Community college faculty involvement in decision-making. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* , 23 (7), 655-674.
- Townsend, B., & Wilson, K. (2006). The transfer mission: Tried and trues, but troubled? *New Directions for the Community College* (136), 33-41.
- Trujillo, A., & Diaz, E. (1999). Be a name not a number: The role of cultural and social capital in the transfer process. In K. M. Shaw, J. R. Valadez, & R. A. Rhoads (Eds.), *Community Colleges as Cultural Texts*. New York, New York: SUNY Press.
- Vaughan, G. B., & Weisman, I. M. (2006). *The community college presidency 2006*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community Colleges.
- Vaughan, G., Mellander, G. A., & Blois, B. (1994). *The community college presidency: Current status and future outlook*. Washington. D.C.: Community College Press.
- Wagstaff, L., & Moore, W. (1974). *Black Educators in White Colleges*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Walker, K. (2001). Opening the door to the baccalaureate degree. *Community College Review* , 29 (2), pp. 18-28.
- Washington, B. T. (1901, August). *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography*. Retrieved April 1, 2008, from Google Book Search:  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=Pa8JAAAIAAJ&pg=PA217&dq=atlanta+exposition&lr=#PPA214,M1>
- Waring, A. L. (2003). African-American female college presidents: Self conceptions of leadership . *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies* , 9 (3), 31-44.

- Watts, G., & Hammons, J. (2002). Leadership development for the next generation. *New Directions for Community Colleges* (120), 59-66.
- Weis, L. (1985). *Between two worlds: Black students in an urban community college*. Boston : Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Weisman, I., & Vaughn, G. (2002). *The Community College Presidency 2001*. Washington, D.C.: Community College Press.
- West, C. (1999). *The Cornel West reader*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.
- West, C., Klor De Alva, J., & Shorris, E. (1998). Our next race question: The uneasiness between Blacks and Latinos. In A. Darder, & T. Rodolfo (Eds.), *The Latino studies reader: Culture, economy, and society* (p. 181). Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Yu, H.C., & Miller, P. (2005). Leadership style: The X Generation and Baby Boomers compared in different cultural contexts. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 26 (1), 35-50.
- Young, R. (1996). Legacy of the post WWII growth years for community college leadership programs. (J. Palmer, & S. Katsinas, Eds.) *New Directions for Community Colleges* , 5-14.
- Yosso, T. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8 (1), 69-91.